Candidacy Examinations and Dissertation Grant Proposals as "Writing Games":

Two Case Studies of Chinese-Speaking Doctoral Students' Experiences

DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

With the increase of international graduate students in English-speaking universities, second language writing professionals have called attention to neglected genres in the academic socialization literature. However, most of the studies have been skewed either toward the early or later stage of writing practices, for example, course assignments or theses/dissertations, and not addressed the academic genres of candidacy examinations and dissertation grant proposals. This qualitative dissertation addresses the gap in the literature. Throughout an academic year, I conducted retrospective interviews with 29 students and multiple text-based interviews with 10 case study students from China and Taiwan. Drawing upon Casanave's (2002) use of the *writing games* perspective for analysis, this dissertation presents two studies based on the multiple case study approach.

The first study explores five students' writing experiences with candidacy examinations. Findings show that the genre of written candidacy examinations varies across disciplines. Among 17 disciplines examined, five examples existed: (1) literature reviews, (2) assigned questions, (3) a dissertation proposal, (4) a dissertation proposal and questions based on the proposal, and (5) a non-thesis proposal. Despite this stressful situation, the students were able to develop strategies and negotiate their roles to win the candidacy writing games.

The second study compares the dissertation grant writing experiences of two doctoral students from two disciplines: biophysics and musicology. The analysis shows that grant writing was like playing writing games, where students had to follow a set of rules and interpret funding agencies' expectations within the complex genre systems. However, the students developed strategies to play the games through rereading guidelines, rewriting proposals, and networking with senior members of discourse communities. Moreover, the findings reveal that grant writing helped the students to see the big picture of their dissertation projects. This study raises awareness of international graduate students' dissertation grant writing practices, and it calls attention to discipline-specific grant writing instruction.

This project reveals that as the students made transitions from coursework into independent research, they played two kinds of writing games: candidacy examinations and dissertation grant proposals. I highlight the Chinese-speaking students' challenges and struggles when dealing with the hidden rules involved in doctoral writing in English as a second language. Suggestions are offered for dissertation advisors, administrators, and thesis writing instructors to better help prepare students for independent research and writing.

Keywords: International graduate students, Second language writing, American doctoral education, Candidacy examination, Dissertation grant proposal

DEDICATION

To my dearest family who always cheer me up when

I struggle with my dissertation

獻給我最親愛的家人

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FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Education

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Cognate Areas: Academic Socialization, International Graduate Students,

     Second Language Writing, Qualitative Research, Case Study

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The formal object of any game is the winning of it:
A man who does not play to win does not really play.
(R. Gahringer, 1959, p. 662)

1.1 Introduction

In the field of second language (L2) writing, professionals have called attention to "neglected genres" in academia (Swales, 1990; 1996; Dudley-Evans, 1999). By "neglected," they mean academic texts that are hidden from the public gaze and kept confidential for access and evaluation. Faced by the growing number of international students in English-speaking graduate programs, how these students deal with their course assignments in English as their second language has been widely examined (Prior, 1991; Casanave, 1995; Riazi, 1997; Hansen, 2000; Seloni, 2008; 2011; Macbeth, 2010). Recently, increased attention has been paid to Ph.D. theses/dissertations because researchers have concerns about guidebooks produced for dissertation writers and writing challenges (Paltridge, 2002; Paltridge & Starfield, 2007; Kamler & Thomson, 2008).

Some researchers are concerned that linguistic problems students face in the course-taking stage may continue through the dissertation stage. Such problems include vocabulary and grammar errors and immature citation practices (James, 1984; Shaw, 1991; Casanave & Hubbard, 1992; Jenkins, Jordan, Weiland, 1993; Dong, 1998; Gurel, 2010). Other scholars examine textual features in Ph.D. theses/dissertations at the micro-level, such as intertextual reference and structure of chapters, to unpack the hidden rules for international graduate students (Bunton, 1999; 2005; Thompson, 2005). However, how these students experience writing related to their dissertations at the end of their coursework and the beginning of their dissertations—for example, writing for candidacy (or comprehensive) examinations and dissertation grant proposals—is little studied. Students are likely to face writing challenges and struggles with these two genres when their dissertation ideas are still under development. This dissertation attends to these two neglected genres in doctoral socialization.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

International graduate student populations facing the transition from course work to the dissertation stage, during which they must deal with high-stakes tasks such as candidacy examinations and dissertation grant proposals, have remained understudied. This dissertation addresses significant lacunae in three broad strands of literature: (1) American doctoral education, (2) second language writing, and (3) doctoral writing mentoring.

First, although existing studies provide us with information about students' difficulties and needs during the transition from course work to independent research,

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they have mainly focused on the U.S. domestic students' transitional experiences (Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992; Golde & Dore, 2001; Golde & Walker, 2006; Nettles & Millett, 2006; Lovitts & Nelson, 2000; Lovitts, 2005). How international students experience such transition has been neglected (Lovitts, 2005; 2008; Gardner, 2008a; 2008b). For example, despite her efforts to address doctoral students' socialization issues during the past few decades, Susan Gardner's works did not include international students for investigation until recently (see Gardner, 2010a; 2010b). In one of her articles (2008b), "*Fitting the mold of graduate school: A qualitative study of socialization in doctoral education*," Gardner mentioned her reason for not including international students for examination: "While often making up a significant proportion of students in the sciences, no international students were chosen for participation in this study as their experiences in their doctoral program are generally very distinct and particular to their culture" (p. 129). This perhaps explains the reason researchers in American doctoral education tend to avoid including international student groups in their studies. It is out of fear of misinterpreting the students' "distinct and particular" cultural experiences, which thus leaves these individuals' socialization processes underexplored.

Second, at the educational intersection, while higher educational researchers focus on students' socialization from the disciplinary and institutional perspectives, L2 writing researchers focus on how students deal with advanced assignment tasks in relation to demonstration of independent research abilities. They generally strive to explore how these students teach themselves to write academically. Despite their efforts, research on students' writing issues in the transition into independent research is few, compared to

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those dealing with writing across the curriculum in the early stage of doctoral

socialization (Prior, 1991; Casanave, 1995; Riazi, 1997; Hansen, 2000; Seloni, 2008;

2011; Macbeth, 2010). How international graduate students actually deal with the two

academic genres (i.e., candidacy examination and dissertation grants) in their later stage

of studies has received relatively little attention. The "textual bridges" (Gonzalez, 2007)

between the end of coursework and the dissertation stage have been rarely documented.

In addition, discussion of L2 students' thesis/dissertation writing-related issues has been

dominated by decontextualized analyses of texts (Parry, 1998; Bunton, 1999; 2005;

Thompson, 2001; 2005; Petric, 2007; Samraj, 2008; Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006;

Bitchener, 2009). Some studies have examined the effects of intensive thesis/dissertation

writing workshops or tutorials (James, 1984; Paltridge, 2002; Manalo, 2006), and others

have investigated nonnative students' perceptions of thesis/dissertation writing (Shaw,

1991; Huang, 2007; Gurel, 2010). Recently, researchers have become interested in how

sociopolitical and disciplinary contexts influence doctoral writers' practices (Prior, 1994;

Braine, 2002; Krase, 2003; Lundell & Beach, 2003; Belcher & Hirvela, 2005; Gonzalez,

2007; Kamler & Thomson, 2008; Casanave, 2010a). Unlike previous research, these

recent studies look beyond texts in a context-sensitive manner to grasp a more diverse

picture of L2 doctoral students' writing processes. This dissertation aligns with the recent

strands of scholarship and explores how different dimensions of power relations shape

and constitute the two genres and writers' practices in candidacy examinations and

dissertation grant proposals.

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Third, a large volume of research has looked at thesis/dissertation mentoring for international graduate students (Belcher, 1994; Dong, 1998; Aspland, 1999; Paltridge & Starfield, 2007; Casanave & Li, 2008; Chang & Strauss, 2010). Yet, how students are guided to prepare for candidacy examinations and dissertation grant proposals during their transitions from coursework to dissertation is not described in this body of literature. While students often participate in these two writing events related to their dissertations, there is a need to examine more closely how these students work with their advisors. This research attends to these issues and aims to shed light on doctoral writing mentoring research.

During the course of this project, I have been guided by two sets of questions:

(1) How did the all-but-dissertation (ABD) students from China and Taiwan across hard and soft sciences come to understand the requirements for candidacy examinations and meet faculty expectations for writing the examinations? What did they actually write? What were their attitudes towards the exam writing? What challenges did they face and what were the resources, networks, and strategies the students employed?

(2) How did the students develop knowledge for writing dissertation grants? What challenges did they face, and what strategies did they use?

I focused on the genres of candidacy examination and dissertation grant proposals because these are the common writing practices during students' transition from coursework to the dissertation stage. Moreover, I chose to examine these two events because students' struggles and discomfort might occur when their dissertation projects

were still evolving. They might encounter challenges as "novices" striving to write like "experts" for these two genres in their fields. I aimed to explore how the students participated in these two high-stakes writing events. In the following, I explain the reason why I chose to recruit ABD students from China and Taiwan across hard and soft sciences disciplines. I also illustrate the reasons behind selecting participants for Chapters 2 and 3 (see Section 1.7 Organization of the Dissertation).

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study differs from studies in the existing literature in terms of the participants studied, theoretical perspectives, and pedagogical implications of the findings. It aims to raise awareness of how doctoral writing during the students' transition into independent research can be contextually complicated and rife with contestations and contradictions caused by "layered" systems (Prior, 1994).

Focusing on one of the largest groups of international students studying in the U.S. (Institute of International Education, 2011), *Chinese-speaking students*, this qualitative study examines the strategies ABD students use to negotiate writing tasks in the particular institutional contexts of their programs over an academic year (2012-2013) at a U.S. Midwestern research university. By "ABD," I refer to those students who passed their candidacy examinations and are currently enrolled in their candidatures. These students are either working on dissertation proposals, collecting/analyzing data for their dissertations, or writing their dissertations. This study aims to gain insights into the difficulties faced by ABDs and benefit those who are in ABD status. The participants are

Chinese-speaking international students who completed their undergraduate studies in China or Taiwan and are studying in the U.S.

In addition to the large enrollment numbers of these students across the country, there are other reasons I chose to focus on this population. One is because of my identity as a native Mandarin Chinese speaker from Taiwan. I have personally faced challenges in the transition from course work to the dissertation, such as learning to negotiate the high-stakes writing demands of the candidacy examination and dissertation grant proposals, dealing with a change of my advisor, and negotiating expectations with new co-advisors. My personal experience allows me to better examine how students from similar national and linguistic backgrounds go through the ABD process. I aim to look at how students negotiate the two writing demands and expectations with their advisory committee. Another reason for focusing on this population is the pedagogical difficulties reflected in existing research for such students. Several studies have reported on the challenges faced by Chinese-speaking students. In Belcher's (1994) study, one Chinese doctoral student in Chinese Languages and Literature did not complete his dissertation and left school because he did not understand how to write critically and was discouraged by his advisor's comments. Similar issues related to meeting the demands of scholarly writing, advisor-advisee issues, and development of student agency in the thesis/dissertation process faced by Chinese-speaking students in English-speaking countries are also revealed in studies by Schneider and Fujishima (1995), Cadman (1997), Dong (1998), Aspland (1999), Hansen (2000), Tardy (2005), Huang (2007), Chang (2009), and Chang and Strauss (2010). The findings in these studies indicate more examination of the

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Chinese-speaking student population is needed, as the population will continue to grow at English-speaking universities in the future.

This study aims to use the theoretical perspective of *writing games* to examine writing issues in relation to candidacy examinations and dissertation grant proposals. I draw on Casanave's (2002) notion of *writing games* as a way to explore how "academic writing consist[s] of rule- and strategy-based practices, done in interaction with others for some kind of personal and professional gain, and that it is learned through repeated practice rather than just from a guidebook of how to play" (p. 3). I aim to explore whether and how L2 doctoral writers are able or unable to define and negotiate rules with key players and develop coping strategies to win the games of candidacy examinations and dissertation grant proposals.

With regard to writing for the candidacy examination in Chapter 2, students need to observe rules such as what to write, how to write it, who they are writing for, and time duration to complete it. These rules might be unwritten in the Graduate School or departmental student handbooks. Students have to develop strategies by conversing with their advisory committee and peers to better understand the process. The complexity involved in the exploration process is a game-like social practice. Similarly, regarding writing for dissertation grant proposals in Chapter 3, rules such as writing conventions, funding priorities, and deadline for submission are important clues. Students who apply for the grants at their first time may not be familiar with the funding systems and writing conventions and have to make an effort to develop a sense of rules. Although the meaning of success varies across contexts, disciplines, and people, in these two particular

settings, success refers to passing the examination or obtaining funding. By contrast, failure means being unable to complete the examination or getting funding. In these situations, texts such as exam papers or grant proposals become the major mediation to accomplish the goals.

Casanave's notion of writing games is related to the larger concept of *socialization*. The term varies in different areas of scholarship such as higher education, rhetoric studies, and applied linguistics (Haneda, 2009). In Casanave's term, she emphasizes on the role of writing in socializing students to establish their scholarly identity and voice in order to gain their legitimate membership in their fields. In this sense, the process of socialization is associated with how novice writers strive to explore the unspoken and unwritten rules and conventions in graduate schools in order to become experts in their specialized disciplines. Thus, writing course papers, research papers, book reviews, candidacy examinations, conference abstracts, a dissertation proposal, and the dissertation is viewed as a social action rather than a rhetorical form or a type.

Using the concept of writing games, this study looks at how L2 doctoral candidates come to understand: (1) the *language* of the game players in the local academic community, (2) epistemological game rules for how *knowledge* was thought to be constructed, and (3) writers' perceptions of the *power* relationships among the key players. In Casanave's terms, these three are *language games*, *knowledge games*, and *power games* that are often involved in the process of writing and thinking especially for novices (see Figure 1.1). By language games, Casanave refers to the process of learning to acquire disciplinary discourse that is often theoretically abstract or ambiguous to

novice writers. As for knowledge games, she indicates that writing often comes with the acquisition of disciplinary knowledge (subject area) and genre knowledge (research articles or a dissertation), and this can be challenging to novice writers. Power games refer to the process through which writers learn to conform or adjust to or resist the values, rules, and expectations of authority figures such as the Graduate School, department, and advisory committee.

The three games are elucidated in Casanave's book. In her longitudinal case study of a doctoral student's socialization in a sociology program, she found that the student, Virginia, was constantly involved in clash of cultures. Although her L1 was English, she felt that sociology was an L2 to her because of the ambiguous theoretical terms she had to familiarize with. Another layer of challenge that Virginia encountered was the type of knowledge embraced by the faculty members in the program. She was playing knowledge games because she found it difficult to adjust to certain types of works that were introduced in the core courses. Virginia was disappointed that the ways of knowing was based on formulas rather than field-work observations close to real life. Furthermore, she felt that writing for course assignments were like playing power games because she struggled to identify who was in charge and who contributed to the knowledge in the field. As she put it, it was like learning to speak with authority figures in their language. Unfortunately, overwhelmed by these games, Virginia decide to quit school and then took a job as a research assistant in an educational organization where she was put in touch with people. Informed by these concepts, I explored how L2 doctoral candidates from China and Taiwan learned to play *language* games, *knowledge games*, and *power games*

involved in the candidacy examinations and dissertation grant proposals. Discussions of these issues are presented in Chapter 4, General Conclusion.

Casanave's metaphor of writing games is well-constructed. It is built on Freadman's (1994) game metaphor for genre, Wittgenstein's (1953) work on language games, and other works such as Wenger's (1998) Communities of Practice, feminist anthropologist Ortner's (1996) notion about practice as situated in the realities of people's lives, Ivanic's (1998) discoursal identity, Goffman's (1981) forms of talk, Bakhtin's (1981) dialogic imagination, and so on. Casanave's writing games also resonates with Kamler and Thomson's (2008) notion of doctoral writing as doing text work/identity work. Kamler and Thomson argue that "texts and identities are formed together, in, and through writing. The practices of doctoral writing simultaneously produce not only a dissertation but also a doctoral scholar" (p. 508).

However, Casanave's application of writing games is limited in some ways. It has never been applied to the situations of candidacy examinations and dissertation grant proposals. In Casanave's (2002) prominent work, *Writing Games: Multicultural Case Studies of Academic Literacy Practices in Higher Education*, she only used the notion to explore writing in the contexts of undergraduate English as a foreign language in writing classes in Japan, master's students in second and foreign language education in the U.S., first-year Ph.D. students in a sociology program in the U.S., and young bilingual faculty completing education in North America and returning to Japan. Relevant to this dissertation is Casanave's examinations of three issues that constantly influence writing

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processes and writers' lives. By adopting the notion of writing games, this study aims to add a new perspective to L2 writing research.
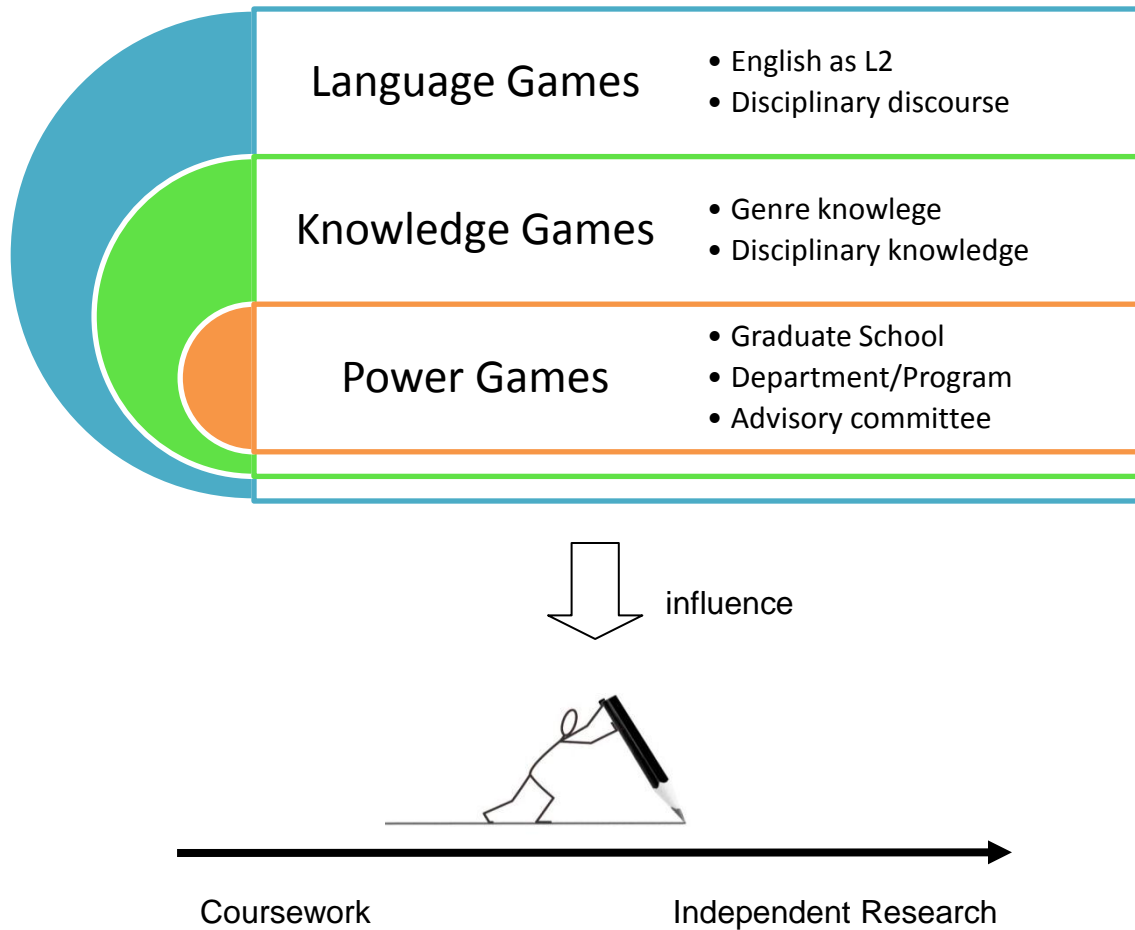
Figure 1.1 Writing Games from Coursework to Independent Research

This figure has served as an analytical device during the course of this project. It helps to examine how candidacy exam takers and grant proposal writers came to understand the unfamiliar writing conventions and constraints (language games),

epistemological game rules readers hold for evaluating the texts (knowledge games), and writers' interpretation of who is in charge of the field knowledge, learning resources, or funding resources (power games).

Last, but not least, findings from this study will help dissertation advisors, administrators, and L2 writing instructors to better understand Chinese-speaking students' writing struggles and strategies during their transitions from coursework to the dissertation. While L2 writing researchers have conducted a plethora of studies on writing issues and practices for theses/dissertations, we know little about how these students come to understand the genres of candidacy examinations and dissertation grant proposals. The findings from this project serve to provide pedagogical and research implications to dissertation advisors, administrators, thesis writing instructors, and writing researchers.

1.4 Methodology

This qualitative study aims to "solicit emic (insider) viewpoints" that can "assist in determining the meanings and purposes that people ascribe to their actions," thereby giving those students a voice (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 110). By and large, I seek to understand how Chinese-speaking ABD doctoral students interpret their writing experiences when making a transition from coursework to the dissertation stage.

Researcher's Roles

I consider myself an insider with the participants in terms of my place of origin (Taiwan) and language (Mandarin Chinese) and the university at which I am enrolled. These variables are what I had in common with my fellow students from China and

Taiwan. My bilingual and bicultural status helped me gain insight into these students' university culture, graduate school requirements, candidacy exams, grant applications, and dissertation processes. My situatedness allowed me a sense of empathy and sensitivity for the students who struggled with their transitions from coursework to the dissertation stage. I was able to really hear the students' voices, which are usually not accessible to people in power such as departmental chairs or faculty members. My status helped me gain insight into advisor-advisee relations and resources available or unavailable to the ABD students. I was, however, an outsider in terms of the fields of study in which my fellow students were enrolled, such as pharmacy, computer science, and musicology. I was unable to see through how they experienced their program structure, course requirements, and mentoring.

My role as a researcher was not static during the course of the study, and it changed across contexts. Occasionally, I was regarded as an expert in second language writing. Some participants discussed their writing difficulties with me when they encountered writers' block or miscommunication with their advisors. There were a few times some informants mistook me as an instructor or representative of the ESL program, and thus they felt hesitant to reveal their views in the interviews. Sometimes students from China were curious about Taiwan and expected to engage in some information exchange. Once in a while I would be invited by a few informants to their apartments or social groups. I was fortunate to see how they interacted with their lab mates, family, or roommates. I noticed that in these informal settings, the informants were more relaxed. They were more willing to talk about their personal life and reveal more things that they

did not feel comfortable discussing in front of my voice recorders during the interviews. Interacting with them in both formal and informal settings shaped my understanding of their living contexts, both private and public. Although I had many interactions with these students, there were times I had to reduce my contact with them so as to maintain my role as a researcher. From the beginning to the end of this project, I had to learn how to switch my roles appropriately in different contexts.

Settings and Participants

This study took place at a Midwestern university with an enrollment of approximately 53,000 students; among them, 5,000 to 6,000 were international students. The four nations with the largest numbers of students enrolled were China, India, Korea, and Taiwan (Office of the University Registrar, 2013). I learned that 1,100 students from China and Taiwan were enrolled in the graduate programs. More precisely, according to the Graduate School of the university, there were 207 doctoral students from China and 45 from Taiwan enrolled in their candidatures ($N = 252$) during the time the study was conducted. It is important to note that I did not intend to make a political statement by focusing specifically on students from China and Taiwan as a group. I want to illustrate that people from these two geographic regions have their unique cultures and can be distinguished from each other in terms of their economic, educational, and political systems alone. I use the term "Chinese-speaking" primarily in reference to the mutually intelligible language, Mandarin Chinese (Swagler & Ellis, 2003). Below is an overview of the 29 participants (from 17 disciplines) involved in this study.

Table 1.1 An Overview of Participants across Disciplines

	Hard Sciences	**Soft Sciences**
No. of disciplines	11	6
Field of study	Physics, biophysics, chemical physics, geography, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, computer science and engineering, nutrition, pharmacy, microbiology, animal sciences	Musicology, education, public policy, sociology, business administration, economics
Country of origin	Taiwan: 11 China: 9	Taiwan: 4 China: 5
Gender	Male: 11 Female: 9	Male: 3 Female: 6
Participants subtotal	20	9

In the following, I describe the data collection process with a focus on the two stages of interviews with students: the one-time retrospective interview and the multiple text-based interviews.

Stage 1: Retrospective Interview with Students

In this stage, I obtained a multifaceted view of different students' research preparation and progression across disciplines at a Midwestern university. I recruited 29

students across 17 disciplines (both hard and soft sciences) for a one-time retrospective interview. This stage lasted more than eight months,[1] and it was overlapped with the second stage, text-based interviews.

I used *purposeful sampling* (Maxwell, 2005) to identify potential participants. By purposeful sampling, I mean locating participants who received their undergraduate education in China or Taiwan. They had to be enrolled in their candidatures after having taken their candidacy examinations (hereafter exams). Simply put, they were all-but-dissertation (ABD) students. That means they were either working on their dissertation proposals, collecting/analyzing data, or writing up their dissertations.

For the recruitment to be efficient, I used several tactics. First, I sent a recruitment letter (see Appendices C for the English version and D for the Chinese) via the listservs of the Taiwanese and Chinese student associations. Second, I obtained information related to the departments/programs of these students from the Graduate School of the university. Third, I advertised in the Writing Center, where international graduate students might go to seek help. Last, I asked my acquaintances to recommend potential participants and contacted them via *Facebook*[2], email, or phone call.

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[1] The university studied went through a conversion from quarters to semesters. The new semester system began in August 2012 in the summer. In this study, the time period for data collection before August 2012 was noted as quarters, and then it was switched to semesters.

[2] *Facebook* is a social networking website founded by the *Facebook* Inc. in 2004. Members can create their own profile, exchange messages, share pictures, and build connections with others by searching names, locations, affiliations, and social groups. It is claimed that over 800 million people are registered and connected on *Facebook*.

I had three criteria for selecting disciplines. They had to consist of (1) a mixture of disciplines across hard and soft sciences, (2) areas of study in which students from China and Taiwan were concentrated, and (3) departments that require submission of a dissertation (because that often requires more writing training and evaluation). First, I aimed to recruit participants across hard and soft sciences (Becher & Trowler, 2001) so as to obtain students from a range of departments and be better able to draw conclusions that reflect the international graduate student population as a whole. I did not compare disciplines to each other (as did Becher and Trowler's study), since the range of disciplines included under science and engineering (hard sciences) was so broad as to render any generalizations to scientific practices invalid or inaccurate. Moreover, education (soft sciences) itself is an interdisciplinary field of study, in which it would be difficult to generalize across sub-disciplines. Instead, what was comparable among the various disciplines was how the students came to understand the gatekeeping system of their doctoral programs, how advisor-advisee relations developed, the patterns they were supervised, and what the students learned from different writing systems. I started with a broad understanding that in natural sciences one's dissertation might be based on co-authorship with his/her advisor and lab mates, which is something that happened less frequently in education, humanities, and social science. Additionally, my purpose for recruiting participants across hard and soft sciences was to understand the various kinds of writing demands. Some disciplines might be *writing-heavy*, while others might be *less-writing-heavy* (Casanave & Hubbard, 1992). *Writing-heavy* refers to disciplines that emphasize writing early and regularly and students' ability to critique the literature and

display authorial stance. These disciplines tend to evaluate students' competence based on how they express their ideas through written discourse. For example, disciplines in soft sciences such as education and musicology are relatively writing-heavy based on my detailed analysis of the online program descriptions and written requirements (for graduate course levels above 600, 700, 800, and 900). Assignments during the coursework may include a literature review, proposal, summary, response paper, reflection, book review, and annotated bibliography (Gonzalez, 2007). On the other hand, *less-writing-heavy* departments are those that focus on hands-on experience and experimental practices in the laboratories or research sites. Disciplines in hard sciences such as mathematics, computer science, electrical engineering, environmental science, (bio-) physics, (bio-)chemistry, and pharmacy are prime examples. In these disciplines, less emphasis was placed on students' competence to write prose, essays, critiques, or reviews, as compared to writing-heavy disciplines.

Second, I selected disciplines based on the fields of study in which students from China and Taiwan were concentrated. In order to obtain this information, I analyzed student lists on program websites and in commencement programs (during the academic years of 2010-2012). These two resources provided detailed information about students' places of origin, universities where they received their undergraduate education, specialization areas and research interests, advisor(s), publications, and so forth. I ruled out participants from some fields of study because of their high completion rates of doctoral degrees (80-90%) and unique training paths. For example, I did not use candidates from the Doctor of Pharmacy (also termed PharmD) program, though I did

recruit participants from the Doctor of Philosophy in Pharmacy program due to the large enrollment of Chinese-speaking students.

Finally, although several Chinese-speaking students were enrolled in musical arts and performance disciplines, I ruled them out because they are not required to submit dissertations (Guidelines for Formatting Theses, Dissertation, and D.M.A Documents, Graduate School, OSU). Rather, they are required to submit alternate types of documents (DMA; Doctor of Musical Arts documents). In summary, I ruled out 50 departments and aimed to recruit participants from a total of 51 programs or departments (see Appendix B: Fields of Study for Recruitment of Students at the University). As noted earlier, I eventually recruited 29 students from 17 disciplines (both hard and soft sciences) for the retrospective interview. Most students (N=20) were from hard sciences, while only a few (N=9) were from soft sciences.

Prior to the interview, informed consent was obtained. Most interviews lasted about 1 to 1.5 hours, depending on the availability of the participant. Only a few went more than 2 hours and included in-depth discussions of the departmental gatekeeping systems, advisor-advisee patterns, laboratory incidents, writing habits and steps, dictionary use, writing and thinking related to use of theory and methods, and other topics. Participants could choose the language they wanted to use for the interview, for example, Mandarin Chinese, English, Taiwanese, or a combination of these languages. The main interview questions were related to transnational paths to the program, transitional points of socialization into the department, difficulties faced, and strategies employed when the students made the transition from course work to the dissertation stage. I used "how"

questions to elicit stories, narratives and descriptions of actual events or practices. I wanted to hear the interviewees' stories about "how something happened in the past, happens now, and will happen in the future" (Becker, 1998, p. 17). I was interested in what connected the storyteller from one point to another and what their facial expressions and body language were telling me when they described their stories. Using Becker's terms, I wanted to find out the connections that were "the pieces of the system in question [c]onnected in such a way that the output of each of the sub-processes that make it up provides one of the inputs for some other processes, which in turn take results from many other places and produce results that are inputs for still other processes, and so on" (p. 41). In the case of my study, the system in question was the American doctoral education as was classified into Gardner's (2008a) three phases of socialization (in terms of students' programmatic, relational, and personal experiences): Phase I: admission, beginning coursework, qualifying exam, assistantship; Phase II: completing coursework examinations; and Phase III: candidacy: research proposal, and dissertation research. Among the three phases, Gardner found that students' difficulties and needs during the transition from coursework to the dissertation stage (from Phases II to III) are more obvious than during the transition from Phase I to Phase II. This project pays particular attention to the students' transitional experiences in the latter two phases.

The interviews were semi-structured and audio-recorded. A background interview was conducted at the beginning of each session to understand each participant's ethnicity, city of origin, educational background, department, funding condition, current progress, and career goals. About 10 minutes were used for the background questions, and to

facilitate this portion of the interview, I used an interview flowchart to keep track of the participant's timeline of PhD study from admission to dissertation. The flowchart was adapted from Gardner's (2008a) study (see Appendix A). For the purpose of this study, it was modified into seven phases: (1) entering the Ph.D. program, (2) beginning coursework, (3) qualifying exam, (4) assistantship, (5) candidacy exam, (6) proposal, and (7) dissertation. I asked the informant to write down his or her background information and time in the flowchart. This was suggested by participants in pilot interviews in order to help them better recall the information.

After the background portion of the interview, I asked them to "Tell me about your story before you were enrolled in the university. What were you doing before you came here? When did you come to this school?" These questions were intended to elicit stories about their past. I then asked, "Tell me about your experience throughout the coursework. What courses did you take? How did you survive your first quarter?" Moreover, I asked them some comparison questions in order to elicit information about how they came to understand the differences of post-candidacy tasks (i.e., dissertation grant proposals, candidacy exams) from those in the pre-candidacy stage (i.e., coursework, qualifying exam/preliminary exam, etc). I also asked about their relationships with others in their program, such as the advisor, faculty, and peers. I then asked about challenges they faced and sources of support sought and received when writing their candidacy examinations and dissertation grants. Trying not to talk too much and giving my participants time to tell their stories, I avoided interrupting them for the most part or imposing any answers

on them. I only interrupted them to check information that I missed. However, interruptions were reduced when I saved my questions until the end of their narrations.

At the end of the retrospective interview, I asked the students if they would like to participate in the case study. After each interview, I wrote detailed field notes reflecting on the setting and context, social relations, and issues of power dynamics of the interview. I typed up my notes immediately after each interview. Before I transcribed them, I listened to the early recordings carefully, reformulated some of the questions, and dropped some questions that seemed vague to the participants, those that led them off track, and those that did not allow them to describe the transnational and transitional processes and events connected with one another. For example, after I asked "Why did you come to study at the university?" one of the participants responded immediately, "Could you be more specific?" The revised Interview Guides helped me better elicit a narrative "based on personal experience" that "details a set of events" (Denzin, 1970, p. 186).

Stage 2: Multiple Case Studies

For the purposes of the two separate studies, I recruited a total of 10 students for the multiple case studies and focused on seven (as reported in Chapters 2 and 3). The advantages of the case study approach for academic literacy are discussed above.

The term *case study* refers to an in-depth study of a particular person, group, or program (Casanave, 2010b). In applied linguistics, a case study is able to look closely at contexts, people, and change over time (Van Lier, 2005, p. 195). Moreover, the case study approach is able to accommodate many different methods, mainly qualitative but

also quantitative, including detailed linguistic analyses of L2 development (Duff, 2008).

As Braine (2002) indicates,

> research on the acquisition of academic literacy by graduate students must be in
> the form of case studies. Case studies provide rich information about learners,
> about the strategies they use to communicate and learn, how their own
> personalities, attitudes, and goals interact with the learning environment, and the
> nature of their linguistic growth. Case studies are also descriptive, dynamic, and
> rely upon naturally occurring data, and are therefore the most appropriate for
> studying the acquisition of academic literacy. The subject [participant] students
> themselves could provide the most important data, such as their sociocultural and
> educational backgrounds, previous educational experiences, language learning
> histories and strategies, and research experience. Data could also be collected
> through interviews with teachers and thesis advisors, observations of lectures,
> seminars, and students' oral presentations, observations of student-teacher
> interactions during lectures and seminars, observations of interactions between
> students and thesis supervisors, textual analysis of selected text and reference
> books used by the students, and the textual analysis of papers and theses written
> by the students and the feedback given by their supervisors (p. 66).

The purpose of conducting multiple case studies was to "explore ways that writing
done by particular people in particular settings reflects and is influenced by unequal

power relations and complex social interactions among many kinds of interested actors"
(Casanave, 2003, p. 96). I wanted to conduct case studies to better understand how
programmatic structure and requirements influence the formation of students' candidacy
exam papers and dissertation grant proposals and how interactions with others such as
their advisor, committee members, peers, and writing consultants shape their texts. In
other words, I aimed to understand how writers negotiate the demands and expectations
of the current writing situation based on what they may have learned from past writing
situations and influence from others (Gonzalez, 2007). I took into account the social,
cultural, rhetorical, and political milieu that influenced students' writing.

My selection criteria for case study participants included:

(1) Students who had had their proposals approved (either formally or informally) in
their programs. These students might be collecting data or doing experiments, or
they already finished data collection and were writing up their dissertations.

(2) Students participating in the initial interview who reported difficulties in writing
either of the two genres (the candidacy exam or dissertation grants) during their
transitions to the dissertation stage.

I avoided recruiting students who were nearing graduation for fear that they might be
extremely busy with their work and more likely to withdraw from the study. I recruited
students for a 1-year in-depth investigation because this stretch of time allowed me to
collect sufficient data. My rationale for the number of students selected for the two
separate case studies in Chapters 2 and 3 was based on the following case studies of
academic literacy.

Table 1.2 Case Studies of Writing at the Graduate Level

Author/ Year	Number of Participants	Backgrounds of Participants	Length of Time for Data Collection
Belcher (1994)	3	L2 PhD students from China and Korea studying applied mathematics, Chinese literature, & human nutrition in the US	1 year
Hirvela & Belcher (2001)	3	L2 PhD students from Latin America studying mechanical engineering, agricultural economics, and agricultural education in the US	5 years
Haneda (2009)	3	L2 MA students from Korea studying in a TESOL program in the US	1 year
Prior & Shipka (2003)	4	L1 undergraduates (1 in engineering, 1 in kinesiology), a PhD student (library info & sciences), and an associate professor (political science & women's studies) in the US	Over a few years (personal communication with Prior, 12/16/11)
Krase (2003)	5	L2 MA and PhD students studying in humanities and social sciences in the US	5 months
Gonzalez (2007)	5	L1 and L2 in humanities & social sciences; 3 MA thesis writers in art history, journalism, & English literature; 2 PhD dissertation writers in biblical interpretation and rhetoric and composition in the US	1 year

In this stage, I conducted (1) two to five text-based interviews with students; (2) textual analysis based on students' drafts in progress and texts they wanted to share during their transition from coursework to the dissertation; and (3) ethnographic observations of students' writing spaces such as their offices, labs, or apartments. The exact procedures differed depending on whether the data was used for inclusion with the study in Chapter 2 or Chapter 3.

Interviews with Case Study Students

I adopted Gonzalez's (2007) text-based interview approach and encouraged students to bring their dissertation grant drafts or candidacy examination materials to share. In these text-based interviews, I let my participants decide what they wanted to discuss according to the texts they brought. About 40 minutes was used for the text-based portion of the interview, and the rest of the time was used to probe some questions listed in the Interview Guides (see Appendix A). Prior to their participation, students were contacted to obtain their informed consent and asked to bring their texts to the interviews. To keep their drafts and texts organized, I prepared portfolios. I also told them if they wished to share electronic files or email correspondences with their advisor or professors with me, I would be happy to collect them. I ensured them that I would not let their advisors know or hear about things they shared with me.

In the first text-based interview with students, I wanted them to tell me about their stories behind the texts—who was the target audience? Who did they show the text to? What was difficult during the writing? How did they go through the writing process? In the rest of the interview, I asked about their earliest memories of writing, wanting to

know who influenced their early writing. I attended to both their public and private writing habits and experiences and whether they did academic or non-academic reading and writing in different formats such as weblogs or public websites. Then I asked about their writing experiences in college and graduate school. I wanted to know if they had any experience of reading or writing in English in college in China or Taiwan. My purpose was to gain insight into their literacy practices in English prior to their education in the United States. I asked questions such as, "How do you think the writing you did as an undergraduate has prepared you for the writing demands of graduate school?" I was interested in the "textual bridges" (Gonzalez, 2007) that had enabled them to navigate through various gatekeeping mechanisms until the last stage of their studies. This part of the interview was conducted in chronological order from undergraduate study to their master's program to their doctoral program. I then asked, "How do you think the writing you did in your doctoral coursework has prepared you for the writing demands of dissertations?" Since questions like this take time to reflect upon, I made sure I gave them time to ponder and describe their experiences. Additionally, I drafted questions pertaining to dissertation mentoring, including, "Tell me about how you came to know your advisor. What do you expect from your advisor? How often do you show your drafts to your advisor? How have your texts been dealt with?" It is important to note that to avoid memory constraints and psychological overloads, any questions prepared beforehand were open for changes and adjustments. If the participants wished to postpone the questions to the second interview or follow-ups, I saved the questions and asked later. At the end of the first text-based interview, I asked my case study participants if I was

allowed to keep the writing samples they brought with them or emailed me prior to the interview.

The second text-based interview was conducted after a few weeks or months. Like the first text-based interview, I spent some time discussing the texts with them. Then I asked them about the questions in the Interview Guides. I paid particular attention to what they had encountered during the time between meetings. I asked, "Since our last discussion, what new writing demands have you encountered? How are you adjusting to them?" I adjusted the frequency and timing of interviews based on the participants' availability and exigencies.

After the two interviews, I conducted follow-ups with participants via email or phone call in order to carefully check information and update my notes regarding their progress. In Krase's (2003) research, he wrote to his participants every three weeks to "inquire how they had been, how their work had been going, and what sorts of projects were in the near future" (p. 93). In Gonzalez's (2007) study, she conducted two text-based interviews and some brief follow-ups. My follow-ups were based on these studies.

With regard to textual analysis, I closely examined the texts that were considered successful or unsuccessful by the participants. I also looked at the comments given by their advisors to understand how both parties negotiated their thoughts. I let my participants know that I analyzed their texts rather than evaluating or judging.

Ethnographic Observations

Moreover, I conducted an observation of the case study students' writing spaces such as their home, office, or lab, depending on their availability. I hoped to gain insights into

their interpretations of being ABD students (the people), coursework-to-dissertation transition (the thing), writing games (the metaphor), writing practices (the plot), daily routine (their life), and conflicts (among the students and their advisor, department/program, and Graduate School). At the end of each observation, I wrote field notes on the given location. I tried to craft a "careful description of details, unfiltered by our ideas and theories…[in order] to create new ideas…into which they can be fitted without forcing" (Becker, 1998, p. 85).

Data Management and Analysis

Over a little more than one year (2012 to 2013), I met with 29 participants from 17 disciplines and conducted 51 interviews in total (each varied from 1 to 2 hours). These interviews included a one-time retrospective interview and multiple text-based interviews. Among the participants, 14 were from China and 15 from Taiwan. There were 14 males and 15 females.

Every time I finished an interview, I would transfer the recorded audio file from my voice recorders (I usually used two in the interviews) to my laptop. In addition, I would electronically scan my field notes and type them up immediately after my interviews. I created individual digital folders for each of my participants.

Having receiving rigorous training through qualitative research classes, I encrypted and backed up all the files in several places, such as my laptop, portable hard drives, and online storage sites (*Dropbox*, *SugarSync,* and *Google Drive*). The files included the research diary, interview recordings, transcripts, translations, field notes, drafts, and miscellaneous other documents. Moreover, I indexed the interview transcripts in a page

or two to see how the collected documents were structured. As for the case studies, I made student portfolios to collect and index all the texts they provided. Since I was interested in the development of students' dissertations, I created table notes of texts for indexing (see Appendix N).

My assistant and I transcribed all the interviews. Rather than coding and categorizing the transcripts, I followed Becker's (1998) approach to "describe what you've found out, but without using any of the identifying characteristics of the actual case" (p. 126). I also followed Gardner's approach (2008a) by identifying four stages in the transcript analysis process: (1) individual case histories to get to know each person's story, (2) departmental features in terms of departmental policies and practices, (3) cross-departmental features by choosing a particular issue that must appear in three of the four departments, that is examples of more general phenomena with cross-case analysis, (4) relationships with what I find out according to the theoretical frame. I focused on the transition from coursework to the dissertation stage, writing games, formats, advisor-advisee patterns, and relationships. Doing so allowed me to present cases that reveal "the full range of variation in some phenomenon" (Becker, 1998, p. 71). I kept in mind Becker's (1998) note about "the trick of identify[ing] the case that is likely to upset [my] thinking and look for it" (p. 87). With regard to textual analysis of the participants' dissertation-related drafts, I followed what Newkirk (1992) indicates by asking myself how I would feel if I were the participant of this study (p. 130). Therefore, I considered how my own writing would be read if I were trying to learn the rules and meet the demands of a given disciplinary context and adjusted my writing accordingly.

Validity Checklist

Over the course of this dissertation, I have kept in mind Maxwell's (2005) validity checklist: (1) intensive long-term involvement, (2) rich and varied data collection, (3) member checks, (4) informal intervention, (5) searching for discrepant and negative cases, (6) triangulation, (7) quantitative statistics such as numerical survey results, and (8) comparison of the same setting at different times. I also paid attention to Lincoln and Guba's (2002) four qualities by which to judge the products of case reports based on naturalistic inquiry and gauged whether my reports were: (1) a reflection of multiple realities including the researcher's role, (2) good writing, (3) consciousness-raising and action-driven, and (4) applicable to the readers' own contexts. These items are overlapped with one other and have guided me to explore the two case studies in Chapters 2 and 3.

1.5 Alternative Dissertation

The reason I chose to write about the two genres was related to my decision to write an alternative dissertation. Simply put, an alternative dissertation is the article-based or journal-format dissertation rather than a monograph. The article-based dissertation is the common form of professional publication in fields such as science and engineering. This is also true of many if not most education fields. In recent years, with the intense competition in academic job markets, it has become increasingly important for students to complete their PhD with published articles in hand (Li, 2005; Li & Flowerdew, 2009). Second language writing professionals such as Thompson (1999) have found that such compilations of published research articles have been increasing in popularity and

frequency as a format for theses/dissertations (termed "complex" traditional theses/dissertations by the author) in academia as compared to monographs ("simple" traditional theses/dissertations).

I have had multiple conference papers accepted and presented at major conferences in my field over the past four years during my doctoral studies. However, I have only published one journal article based on my master's thesis completed in my home country, Taiwan. I am aware that some job positions for full-time assistant professors in Taiwan require applicants to have a substantial amount of publications during their doctoral studies. It was clear that I should consider writing an alternative dissertation seriously. However, this does not mean that I had no hesitation over the format and my abilities. I consulted my co-advisors and found that both were supportive of this format. I learned that one example of this style of dissertation was submitted by Kwang Hee Hong in my program. Hong's (2009) dissertation (titled *L2 Teachers' Experience of CALL Technology Education and the Use of Computer Technology in the Classroom: The Case of Franklin County, Ohio*) comprises an introductory chapter, two published studies in the middle, and a concluding chapter at the end.

Following Hong's dissertation model and my co-advisors' suggestions, I decided to narrow down my focus to two topics in order to write articles for publication. I carefully examined the literature and found that the two genres noted earlier have been underexplored in the field of second language writing. After some discussion with my co-advisors and committee, I decided to write one article related to Chinese-speaking students' candidacy exam writing experiences (Chapter 2) and the other about

dissertation grant writing (Chapter 3). Of note is that originally I decided to include one more paper related to dissertation mentoring and linguistic co-membership between Chinese-speaking advisors and advisees. However, since most of the participants were from science and engineering departments and their dissertations are article-based, it would have taken longer for me to collect sufficient data to write my own article. Thus, I did not include such a paper in this dissertation.

Over the past few months of writing, I have found some advantages in writing an article-based dissertation. Foremost is that I have been able to utilize a network of professional resources before graduation. I have received feedback from my co-advisors and committee, both of whom are individuals who serve on multiple prestigious editorial boards; used one-on-one tutorial services from the OSU writing center; taken a dissertation writing class in the English as a Second Language (ESL) composition program; searched out and used U.S.-based copyediting services, and so forth. Such resources may not be available to me when I graduate from OSU and return to Taiwan. These resources were valuable to me because they have helped me refine and polish my papers. I hope this perspective can be useful to prospective alternative dissertation writers.

I also want to acknowledge that one major challenge for me was writing the alternative dissertation in a race against time. Setting up the goal to write for publications became the stumbling block for timely graduation. Like many all-but-dissertation students, I have been writing my dissertation and looking for jobs at the same time. Since many positions require a PhD in hand, I was overwhelmed by the expectation to write a publishable article and obtain my degree, not to mention my financial difficulties. I

thought about going back to write a monograph-style dissertation several times. However, my co-advisors' feedback and encouragement enabled me to accomplish this alternative dissertation. I may not have handled this process as well as someone with more experience, but I hope this reflection can bring prospective students some insight. When time is ticking, it can be challenging to complete an alternative dissertation. In my experience, finding a balance between timely graduation and high-quality writing was an important issue.

1.6 Selecting the Journals

To write an alternative dissertation, some universities, like The University of Alabama, delineate, "To prepare a journal-format dissertation or thesis, the student uses the journal's 'information for authors' or similarly titled guidelines in conjunction with the Graduate School's Student Guide to Preparing Electronic Theses and Dissertations" (Webpage of the Graduate School of the University of Alabama). Under my co-advisors' guidance, I strived to locate one or two target journals for the two topics. The reason was that every journal has different formats, conventions, or guidelines to observe. Thus, paying attention to "information for authors" has been one of my learning processes.

The process of reading the information for authors from different journals prepared me to select the journals for the two topics. I paid attention to details such as aims and scope, whether it was peer-reviewed, the word limit, the geographical location of the journal company, and the social science index in relation to the journal. In addition to that, I also evaluated whether qualitative research was frequently published in the journal in which I was interested, because some journals prefer only quantitative articles. Following

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my co-advisors' advice, I carefully analyzed recently published articles in my target

journals to keep track of changes regarding formats and research topics. I created tables

of information and kept notes on my observations.

After a long time considering and discussing journals with my advisory committee, I

decided to submit the article on candidacy exam writing to *Journal of English for*

Academic Purposes (*JEAP*) and the other article to *Journal of English for Specific*

Purposes (*JESP*). In other words, Chapter 2 will be submitted to *JEAP* and Chapter 3 to

JESP. These two journals are the best homes for my articles because they have published

studies related to second language writing at the doctoral level for academic and specific

communication and teaching purposes.

As is clear from the length of time I spent considering target journals, it was a

challenge for me to commit to these two. I was concerned about the scholarly reputation

of these two journals and my immature identity as an expert writer. The consequence of

not deciding on a journal more quickly made it difficult to focus on a particular audience

for rhetorical purposes. I eventually came to realize that I must decide on the journals

because being unsure about the readers impeded me from writing decisively in a smooth

manner. I was reminded by my dissertation writing class instructor that good writers

always write with the readers in mind. They want to get readers engaged in their texts

instead of leaving them behind. Meanwhile, I realized that although I am a novice in

writing for publications, I must pretend I am an expert in the field who is able to identify

research gaps, build work on previous research, and present new findings. I was

influenced by an L2 writing practitioner, Xiao-Ming Li, who points out how novice

writers can practice developing an identity by imagining themselves as experts (Casanave & Li, 2008). This helps me enhance my confidence and exchange dialogues with the scholars in existing literature and in conferences. I hope this note is useful to prospective alternative dissertation writers in my program as well as those in the field of education in general.

1.7 Organization of the Dissertation

While Chapter 1 has addressed the research gaps and questions, two separate but interrelated studies comprise the main parts of this dissertation in Chapters 2 and 3. Table 1.3 presents an overview of the two chapter titles and case study participants.

Table 1.3 An Overview of Two Chapters and Case Study Participants

Chapter	Title	Number of Participants	Discipline
Chapter 2	"Write" of Passage: An Exploratory Study of International Graduate Students' Experiences with Candidacy Examinations	5	Musicology, public policy, geography, computer science, and pharmacy
Chapter 3	Dissertation Grant Proposals as "Writing Games": An Exploratory Study of International Graduate Students' Experiences	2	Biophysics and musicology

Using semi-structured retrospective interviews and document analysis, Chapter 2 examines how five Chinese-speaking doctoral students from China and Taiwan learned to

write their candidacy examinations in the hard and soft sciences through these questions: How did the students play candidacy exam writing games across disciplines? How did they understand the game rules and negotiate with the game players (i.e., advisory committee)? What game strategies did they use?

Chapter 3 presents a case study that compares the dissertation grant proposal writing experiences of two ESL Chinese-speaking doctoral students. Previous studies have examined grant proposals written by faculty rather than students. The present study aims to show how student writers participate in dissertation grant applications from two different disciplines: biophysics and musicology. The former applied for the same grant twice and successfully obtained funding in her resubmission; whereas, the latter applied for two grants, but was unsuccessful with either application. Using textual analysis, text-based interviews, and ethnographic observations of writing space, this study shows these two students' struggles with the high-stakes grant writing tasks and their negotiations with the complex genre systems. It further demonstrates how the grant proposal is related to the students' coursework and how networking with senior members of discourse communities plays a role in the writing process. This study also draws some implications for ESL writing instructions and future research on grant writing.

Of note is that in these two studies, I aimed to select participants across hard and soft sciences disciplines in order to identify and compare variations of writing demands and practices. I selected five students for Chapter 2 because they were willing to provide texts required for their candidacy examinations and participate in multiple text-based interviews to share their writing experiences. Moreover, two students were selected for

the case study in Chapter 3 because they were more engaged than the other participants in terms of providing texts, email correspondences, and relevant information for data analysis and triangulation. It is of great importance to note that by selecting seven participants out of the 29, I did not throw away the rest of the 22 cases. Rather, I reported the seven students' narratives by building on the experiences of the entire group. In other words, I chose to let the seven case study students speak their stories that represent the entire population under investigation. In this dissertation, I do not report in detail about the 22 students' stories. However, general findings, discussions, and implications of all the participants' experiences are presented in Chapter 4.

While two separate studies are presented in Chapters 2 and 3, the main topic under study throughout this entire project is Chinese-speaking ABD students' writing experiences in transition from coursework to the dissertation at a US university. Following the two studies, Chapter 4 concludes this dissertation by summarizing the findings and discussing the implications of these findings, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

**"WRITE" OF PASSAGE: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL
GRADUATE STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES WITH CANDIDACY
EXAMINATIONS**

*Explicit rules prescribing required and permitted moves,
or uses of pieces, and rules for deciding wins and errors may be simple enough.
But what are we to make of the unstated rules of good form which distinguish the
accomplished player from the novice?
Are they really rules?*
(R. Gahringer, 1959, p. 666).

2.1 Introduction

Writing is the principal means graduate schools and doctoral programs use to assess

students' progress, though written evaluations differ among national systems. Some, like

certain doctoral programs in the UK, Australia, and New Zealand do not require students

to take a candidacy or comprehensive examination before they undertake

theses/dissertations (Tinkler & Jackson, 2000; Bourke, Hattie, & Anderson, 2004; Kiley,

2009). Others, like the focus of this study, doctoral programs at a research university in

the US, require students to complete a candidacy examination prior to the dissertation. The definition of the term *candidacy examination*[3] varies among institutions in the US, and its forms and requirements vary depending on the advisory committee, department, degree sought, and university. In the university where this study was conducted, a candidacy examination (CE) refers to "a test of the student's comprehension of the field, allied areas of study, capacity to undertake independent research, and ability to think and express ideas clearly" (Graduate School Handbook, 2012-2013, p. 22). Differences exist, however, in most fields, graduate students reach their candidacy two or three years after they have completed a certain amount of required coursework. The CEs generally consist of written and oral portions. The written portion precedes the oral and takes different forms across or within disciplines. The CEs are often given on a pass/fail basis, and students must pass both written and oral portions to continue their studies.

Professionals in the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) field have called attention to the socio-political aspects of academic writing (Casanave, 1995; Braine, 2002; Canagarajah, 2002) particularly by examining "artifacts for evaluation" (Casanave, 2003, p. 87). These artifacts consist of writing such as graded papers, essay exams, and manuscripts submitted for publication. As Casanave (2003) points out, "such artifacts are produced in a social and political context where writers and their writings are compared to other writers and their writings, and where institutional norms, instructor and

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[3] At some US institutions, a candidacy examination is known as a comprehensive examination (abbreviated as *comps*), a preliminary examination (*prelims*), a general examination (*generals*), or a qualifying examination (*quals*).

gatekeeper criteria, feedback, and decisions of powerful evaluators help determine what 'success' means" (p. 88). In this study, the artifacts for evaluation refer to the written portion of a candidacy examination that is produced to meet the requirements and expectations of the Graduate School, departments, and advisory committee. These exam artifacts are political documents in the sense that they are evaluated to determine whether students are qualified to be candidates in their discourse community. CE writing becomes a crucial indicator of students' potential for success or barrier. It is a time during which students are likely to face struggles and anxiety influenced by doctoral programs and departmental requirements. More crucially, students might notice a discrepancy between their expectations of the examination and the criteria used by their advisory committee, and have to spend time negotiating expectations for the exam texts.

In EAP, with the increase of international students in English-medium doctoral programs, a majority of studies on writing challenges have focused on the following:

- course assignments (Prior, 1991; Casanave & Hubbard, 1992; Seloni, 2011),
- research publications (Cho, 2004; Tardy, 2004; Li & Flowerdew, 2009),
- a dissertation proposal/prospectus (Prior, 1994; Cadman, 2002), or
- the dissertation (e.g., Belcher, 1994; Desmond, Cooley, Lewkowicz, & Nunan, 1998; Bunton, 1999; Thompson, 2005; Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006).

However, we have very little knowledge about artifacts for candidacy examinations and these students' candidacy examination writing experiences. I, as an international doctoral student, experienced challenges when writing for the CE and thus conducted this study to examine international doctoral students' CE writing experiences at a Midwestern

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US university. Such knowledge can offer useful implications for EAP professionals regarding artifacts for evaluation and for course advisors regarding writing in transition from coursework to independent research.

To explore students' CE writing experiences, this study only attends to the written portion and excludes the oral. This study does not explore the micro-level textual content written by the exam takers. Rather, it incorporates document analysis of program handbooks and interviews with students to capture students' perceptions of CE writing.

2.2 Research on Candidacy Examination Writing

A very small body of work related to students' candidacy examination writing experiences in the US includes those conducted by Diekelmann and Ironside (1998) and Lin (2003). Examining US domestic students' overall writing experiences in nursing doctoral programs, Diekelmann and Ironside found that the students felt pressure when writing their essays for the CE and that they were being tested on their writing proficiency. This study suggests that writing the CE is not intuitive to first language (L1) students and is a source of frustration when students are asked to comply with pre-set specifications.

The study conducted by Lin (2003) is the only comprehensive study related to CE writing experiences. Lin investigated the experiences of L1 and L2 doctoral students who successfully completed their CEs in education related fields. Lin found that the students relied on their understandings of the purposes of the CE, social interactions with their advisory committee, and personal and professional goals for pursuing the Ph.D. degrees to accomplish the CE writing tasks. Lin found that the students who valued social

interactions with their advisor and professors participated more fully in their academic communities than those who did not. Lin's findings corroborate Diekelmann and Ironside's (1998) study regarding the fact that challenges of writing CEs are not unique to L2 writers. Informed by Lin's research, this study explores the social interactions between exam takers and their advisory committee, though unlike Lin's, it also compares the differences in exam structures across disciplines. Since a large number of international students are enrolled in science and engineering doctoral programs (Institute of International Education, 2011), it is critical to examine how individual CE writing in these fields is influenced by requirements of the Graduate School and departments.

2.3 Theoretical Frameworks

The term *genre* has been approached in a variety of ways (Hyon, 1996). Originally, genre is referred to as text types (letters, research articles, and recipes) or text structures (narration, description, and exposition; Hyland, 2004a, p. 28). In EAP, the most famous approach is Swales's (1990) "moves" analysis in research article introductions focusing on linguistic features and rhetorical patterns. In this view, a genre is often regarded as fixed and structured. The ways to master a certain genre is through recurrent use of conventionalized forms through which individuals develop relationships, establish communities, and get things done. Novice writers are assumed to be outside a particular genre-using community. If they lack this familiarity, they often struggle to create appropriate texts.

Nevertheless, this view has been criticized for removing genres from the complex and dynamic sociopolitical contexts that give rise to them (Casanave, 2002; Johns,

Bawarshi, Coe, Hyland, Paltridge, Reiff, & Tardy, 2006) and for the diffuse notion of discourse community that assumes shared genres and goals for communication (Borg, 2003). More recently, genres are viewed as fluid, complex, and multimodal in recent EAP and New Rhetoric studies (Tardy, 2006; Molle & Prior, 2008). Approaches such as case studies and ethnographies have been used to study genres by drawing the connections among the textual, social, and political dimensions of writing. From this perspective, texts in a genre can vary depending on the values of those who are judging the genre or tasks set by the authority figures in a particular context (Chiseri-Strater, 1991; Casanave, 1995). Writers have both choices and constraints to make changes in their texts in a particular genre. Such view is useful to this study for defining genres as how writers know from their experiences with producing texts rather than how text types function.

Aligned with this view, Casanave (2002) presents the notion of *writing games*. She indicates that academic writing is a game-like situated social practice regarding how individual writers can adjust to, conform to, or resist the socio-political practices. As Casanave points out, "academic writing consists of rule- and strategy-based practices, done in interaction with others for some kind of personal and professional gain, and that it is learned through repeated practice rather than just from a guidebook of how to play" (p. 3). For the purpose of this study, I looked at how L2 exam writers played the CE writing games by rules and developed strategies for the game. CE writing is game-like because there are specific rules to learn such as formats and conventions (text-internal) as well as deadline, sit-in/take-home, and advisory expectations (text-external; see Bhatia's

distinction, 2008). Practice of the rules is an important part of the game (Freadman, 1994). However, these rules often create challenges to exam takers. To write the CE, exam takers have to develop strategies such as referring to handbooks, discussing with those who passed their CEs, or negotiating with their committee. Rules can be regarded as a way to distinguish one game from another (e.g., tennis and football) or one textual boundary from another (e.g., a dissertation proposal and questions based on the proposal). Students might play with two different games when rules vary. This study is exploratory in nature regarding the application of writing games notion, which has seldom been applied in EAP research. Although Casanave (2002) applied this notion to explore writing in various academic contexts (from undergraduate to junior faculty writing), it has never been used to examine CE writing. The game metaphor offers new possibilities to understanding how rules enable or disable writers to create the texts, and how writers strategize to accomplish the CE game.

2.4 The Study

This study was conducted at a US research university where there are 5,000 to 6,000 international students at the graduate level. I focused on students from China and Taiwan because of their large enrollment numbers in US doctoral programs in recent years.

Data Collection

I began the study in spring 2012, contacting doctoral candidates from China and Taiwan studying at the university via email and *Facebook* to ask if they might be interested in participating in my research. These students were either working on dissertation proposals, collecting/analyzing data for their dissertations, or writing their

dissertations. The research consisted of two stages: (1) retrospective interviews with 29 students to gain an understanding of their range of backgrounds, coursework requirements, disciplinary expectations, and programmatic writing demands; (2) two to three text-based interviews with five case study students to understand texts produced for the CEs and their experiences with the processes. The interviews in these two stages lasted from one to two hours. All were audio-recorded and primarily conducted in their L1, Mandarin Chinese. In the first stage, semi-structured interview guides (see Appendix A) were used for retrospective interviews. Specifically, a protocol was developed to address the transition from the end of doctoral coursework to the dissertation, including the CE. In the second stage, for the text-based interviews, I asked the five case study students to bring texts submitted and to share the stories behind the texts. The interviews were all transcribed, selectively translated into English for inclusion in this paper, and sent to the participants for verification. All of them responded and made changes accordingly.

Data Analysis

My analysis focused on students' narratives relating to how they made sense of the CE structure, what the expectations were, and what they learned from the process overall. I used the constant comparison method for the analysis. First, I triangulated the interview transcripts with my research diary and field notes, looking for salient themes across the 29 students. Second, I conducted textual analysis of the Graduate School handbook and department/program handbooks, which describe the structure, definition, purpose, and formation of advisory committees for the CE. I paid special attention to how

departmental/program handbooks made references to the Graduate School's guidelines concerning the CE. Since the Graduate School does not impose a standard format, written exam formats vary across departments. In this study, texts submitted for the CE are viewed as a genre as a whole. As Paltridge points out, "genres vary in terms of their typicality. A text may be a typical example of a genre or a less typical one, but still be an example of the particular genre" (cited in Johns *et al*., 2006, p. 236). For instance, research papers across disciplines can vary in a variety of ways but still continue to be examples of the same genre (Samraj, 2004). Informed by this notion, I identified examples of the CE genre across hard and soft sciences disciplines (Becher & Trowler, 2001). I found five examples of the CE genre across 17 fields (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Five Examples of Candidacy Examination across Fields

No.	Examples	Fields of Study (N=17)	Participants (N=29)
1	Literature review paper	Musicology, education, physics	6
2	Answers to assigned questions	Public policy, sociology, business administration	3
3	Dissertation proposal	Geography, biophysics, mechanical engineering, economics	5
4	Dissertation proposal & answers to questions	Computer science, nutrition, electrical engineering	7
5	Non-thesis proposal	Pharmacy, microbiology, animal sciences, chemical physics	8

Participants: The Five Cases

The multiple case study approach was adopted because writing researchers have recommended its use to enable understanding of the relationship between genres and learners' writing practices (e.g., Ivanic, 1998; Belcher & Hirvela, 2005). I selected five participants for case studies because each student completed one of the five examples identified above. I used this approach to compare these students' CE writing experiences. Table 2.2 presents the profiles of these students. One was female (Huan), while the others were males. Their ages ranged from late twenties to late thirties. Three were in hard sciences (geography, computer science, pharmacy), and two were in soft sciences (musicology, public policy). These students completed their exams in different periods of time. All of them passed their written and oral exams successfully the first time they took their CEs. All are referred to by pseudonyms.

Table 2.2 Participants' Profiles and Experiences with Written Exams

	Huan	Tong	Enlai	Fu	Boren
Program	Musicology	Public policy	Geography	Computer science	Pharmacy
Years of study	6	4	3	3	3
Year exam was taken	End of Year 3	Beginning of Year 3	End of Year 3	Beginning of Year 4	End of Year 2
Format	Literature review papers	Assigned questions	Dissertation proposal	Dissertation proposal & questions based on proposal	Non-thesis proposal
Length (q: question; pp: pages)	4 essays (each 22 to 26 pp)	Part A: (4 qs, 5 pp); Part B: (1 q, 5 pp)	Proposal (60-70 pp)	Proposal (100 pp); 5 questions (10 pp)	Proposal (12 pp)
Sit-in/ take-home (time duration)	Take-home (1 paper per week over 4 weeks)	Sit-in: Part A (8 hrs in 1 day); Take-home: Part B (8 hrs in 1 day); 1 week between 2 parts	Take-home (20 days)	Take-home (proposal: 1 month; questions: 12 days)	Take-home (1 month)

2.5 Findings

I focus on how the five students came to understand the CE as a whole and how they wrote by following the rules. Then I present their views toward the CE and strategies for writing. Following that, I describe how they selected their exam committee. Last, I report how they managed their time for exam writing.

Understanding the Game

The students reported that they came to understand the CE game via three resources: the Graduate School handbook, department/program handbook, and their advisor. All of them indicated that they gained knowledge related to the definition and portions (written and oral) of the CE from the Graduate School handbook. However, they seemed to pay more attention to rules stated in their department/program handbooks than the Graduate School handbook. The reason was that departmental handbooks covered specific information and requirements regarding the exam. For example, Huan referred to statements such as the following:

> The written portion of the examination…will demonstrate the student's fundamental knowledge of the field of music and preparation in the area of concentration. These examinations will normally require three to five days, with four to five hours of writing each day, or they may be administered sequentially over a more extended period of time with assigned projects. In the latter case, no project shall require nor will the student be permitted more than two weeks for

completion. The advisor will prepare the examination in consultation with other

members of the student's four-member Advisory Committee…

(Musicology Student Handbook, 2011-2012, p. 15)

Like Huan, the other students indicated that they paid particular attention to details

such as the timeline for completion, exam format, and role of the advisory committee

described in their handbooks. In their discussions of understanding the CE, the students

tended to mention how they were guided by their advisors prior to the CE. Three students

(Boren, Fu, and Enlai) indicated how their advisors took the initiative in contacting them

about the exam.

Boren's advisor encouraged him to finish the exam near the end of his second year

and notified him via email. About one and a half months prior to the exam, Boren's

advisor met with him individually and assigned him a research topic to prepare for the

exam. Boren's experience is similar to that of science and engineering students in prior

studies (Dong, 1998; Harasti & Street, 2009) relating to the common practice of topic

assignment by their advisors.

Likewise, Fu learned about the exam from his advisor. Fu's advisor suggested that he

begin his CE in the beginning of his fourth year of study, after he published sufficient

work. It usually takes longer for students in computer science to begin their CEs because

they must have published studies in their pre-candidacy, and those results are generally

included in their proposals required by the CE. Fu's situation resembles the biology

students' experiences in Golde's (2005) study regarding the role advisors play in deciding

when students can write up their dissertations, which is typically based on having completed sufficient work.

Enlai was also advised by his advisor when to begin his exam. However, he did not receive much information about how to prepare for it. As he put it, "my advisor only told me about when to complete the exam—complete [it] as soon as possible. But she did not tell me about how to prepare for it. Before I took it, I had to ask my lab mates about how they prepared their exams."

While the aforementioned students were directed by their advisors to begin their exams, Tong was informed by his program chair[4]. In the quarter during which the CE began, the chair notified students who were eligible to begin their exams. It was the first year Tong's program implemented a new policy on the exam. When asked about the criteria for eligibility, Tong commented that he knew little about "their standards." Tong's advisor was not allowed to be involved in his exam by assigning questions, reading his written answers, or participating in his oral exam. According to Tong, the CE is considered as "a standardized test," and thus a specific committee would be designated to assign questions. The formation of the CE committee would be different from the student's dissertation committee in order to evaluate whether students have the ability to become candidates.

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[4] In Tong's program, "program chair" refers to "the Chair of the Doctoral Studies Committees who assists the student in scheduling courses and in becoming familiar with the School and its doctoral program" (Public Policy Student Handbook, 2011-2012, p. 10).

Unlike all the other students, Huan took the initiative to approach her advisor and discuss how to prepare for the exam. In discussion with her advisor, Huan learned that she could begin her exam whenever she was ready.

Writing by Following the Rules

Each of the five students experienced different writing games to meet the requirements of the CE genre required in their departments. It is noticeable that departmental rules greatly influenced what students had to produce and the period of time they were allowed for completing their exams.

CE as Literature Reviews

In musicology, to help students understand what they wanted to do and what would be feasible for their dissertations, students like Huan were required to write literature reviews that could be interrelated in certain ways. A literature review refers to surveying relevant sources or doing a substantial amount of reading of previous research in a particular subject area before one embarks on his/her dissertation (Kwan, 2008). In Huan's case, she was required to provide literature reviews with comprehensive knowledge of certain topics with summaries and syntheses of previous studies. Huan discovered her exam topics through writing a course paper about Chinese women and music. Receiving high praise from her advisor, Huan decided to conduct a thorough review in the CE to prepare herself for her dissertation. Huan remarked,

I decided the topics according to the dissertation direction [I visualized]. I told my committee members about certain areas for reviews, and they gave me questions

accordingly. Basically I informed them what I planned to do for my dissertation. They did not have any opinions.

Huan wrote one paper per week for four consecutive weeks. When asked if she could write ahead before she received the questions, Huan responded, "In my program, you could only begin your research after you got the questions." After completing each paper, she sent them to her advisor via email. Her advisor then distributed the papers to respective committee members. Her exam writing experience was in accordance with her department's requirements. Huan's experience echoes Kamler and Thomson's (2006) viewpoint in terms of the importance of literature reviews for conducting research in the humanities and social sciences. Huan's case also corroborates Kwan's (2008; 2009) findings regarding discursive practices of doing literature reviews, which constantly involve researching, reading, and writing.

CE as Assigned Questions

The public policy written exam consists of two groupings of assigned questions that are fairly structured. Tong's experience is consistent with his program's requirements stating students are expected to demonstrate four skills in the two written portions:

(1) Knowledge of the material (reproduce from memory)

(2) Understanding of the material (logically reason, compare and contrast, limitations of the theory)

(3) The ability to go beyond the existing literature to suggest new empirical

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research questions or conceptual solutions to theoretical problems

(4) The ability to apply theory to a particular theoretical or applied problem

(Public Policy Student Handbook, 2011-2012, p. 30)

More specifically, the handbook indicates that in the first written part, students are expected to demonstrate the skills described in items one through three, while in the second part, skills two through four are expected. Tong's program considers these four skills basic and, surprisingly, "reproduction from memory," a necessary skill to move towards candidacy. There was a week between the two written parts. According to Tong, for the first part, he was required to sit in a room for a closed-book, eight-hour exam, during which he had to write answers to four questions based on 30 sample questions he studied prior to the exam. Those questions were assigned by two exam committee and then distributed by his program chair for exam takers to study prior to the CE. For the second part, Tong could choose a topic according to his interest and write a take-home essay in a day. Tong had to learn to juggle two parts of the CE game.

CE as Dissertation Proposal

Enlai wrote a dissertation proposal for the geography candidacy exam. According to his program policy, students are required to demonstrate: (1) "competency in the subject matter of [their] area of specialization, (2) a working knowledge of the appropriate bodies of theory and methodology, (3) an acquaintance with geographic and atmospheric sciences literature and journals, (4) the ability to express facts and ideas clearly and effectively in both spoken and written English, and (5) an overall competence to pursue

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the independent research required for the dissertation" (Geography Student Handbook, p. 31). Therefore, a research proposal is considered appropriate to evaluate students' qualifications for being candidates. Enlai completed his proposal within one month of the oral exam. He spent nine days writing his initial proposal, ten days rewriting to meet a committee member's expectations, and two hours defending his proposal as described by his program policy.

CE as Dissertation Proposal and Questions Based on the Proposal

Fu, in computer science, was required to complete their CEs by the end of their fourth year. According to his program policies, Fu was required to write two parts:

(1) A ***dissertation proposal*** consisting of title, abstract, significance of the problem, scope and objectives of the research, methodology, expected results and conclusions, and expected contributions to the state of art/literature. Students are encouraged to include in the written portion any preliminary results that support the dissertation proposal.

(2) ***Questions*** posed by the advisory committee on receiving the dissertation proposal. (Computer Science Program Handbook, Webpage)

Over the course of a month, for the first part of his exam, Fu created his dissertation proposal (100 pages total, single-spaced), including the parts such as "significance of the problem" and "methodology" as stated above. The structure of his dissertation proposal consisted of an introductory chapter (8 pages), three published articles (66 pages),

suggestions for future work (6 pages), and a bibliography (9 pages). According to Fu, his dissertation format will be similar to that of his proposal and thus having such formatting experience in his CE will be beneficial in structuring his dissertation. Such a dissertation proposal structure is similar to the "complex" traditional dissertations that typically begin with an introduction, followed by a number of individual studies, and end with a general conclusion (Thompson, 1999). Moreover, as noted earlier, Fu's department encourages students to "include any preliminary results that support the dissertation proposal." This explains why students in computer science have to wait until they have sufficient work from published studies to take their CEs. After completing his proposal, Fu showed it to his advisor, revised it based on his advisor's feedback, and then obtained his advisor's approval to distribute his proposal to three committee members.

Two days after submitting his proposal, Fu began the second part of his written exam by spending 12 days answering five questions given by his advisory committee. Fu's advisor received all the questions from the committee members and emailed them to Fu on the scheduled day. To answer the questions, Fu had to read papers, run experiments, and create research plans based on assigned tasks. Fu wrote 10 pages (single-spaced) for the second part.

CE as Non-Thesis Proposal

In pharmacy, Boren had to write a non-thesis proposal distinct from his dissertation project but pertinent to his advisor's research areas. Unlike most students, students in physical and biological disciplines (e.g., pharmacy, microbiology, animal sciences, chemical physics) typically work on their dissertations related to their advisors' research

projects. Writing a non-thesis proposal is considered appropriate for evaluating students'

ability to conduct research independently. Boren finished his proposal writing as

described in his program guidelines:

> Initially, the student will provide the Advisory Committee with specific aims and
> an abstract of the proposal (not to exceed one page, double-spaced), and meet
> with the Advisory Committee to obtain approval of the topic…In general, the
> proposal format should be consistent with the style of a National Institute[s] of
> Health (NIH) proposal and should be limited to 10-12 pages. (Pharmacy
> Handbook, 2012, p. 19)

 In sum, the five examples and the students' experiences presented above indicate

writing practices valued in these disciplines to evaluate students' qualifications for being

doctoral candidates. In some cases, a CE genre consists of two written portions with

different sets of rules, writers like Tong and Fu had to learn to accomplish two different

writing games. Although these may vary depending on the departmental requirements,

formation of exam committee, and individual goals, they are examples of the CE genre

based on document analysis and interviews.

Views and Strategies Towards the Game

Analysis of interviews reveals that the students had a wide range of views about their

exam writing. Huan seemed to hold a positive view, while Tong and Enlai appeared to

feel more negative. However, Fu and Boren sounded neutral (see Table 2.3 below).

The students' differing views were related to their own expectations of the exam task and their advisors' attitudes toward the CE. For example, Huan regarded exam writing as more of "a task to complete than to get the most out of it." The topics of her four literature reviews were film music and women's studies, globalization issues in films, Peking operas, and Chinese women in films. Among all four review papers, the one on which she worked with her advisor had the most influence on her dissertation. Huan had a clear understanding that not every paper would shape her dissertation.

Table 2.3 A Summary of Participants' Attitudes towards Exam Writing

Name	Field of study	Example	Exam writing (EW) attitude
Huan	Musicology	Literature review papers	EW is "a task to complete than to get the most out of it."
Tong	Public policy	Assigned questions	EW is "awful" and "subjective" in terms of its structure.
Enlai	Geography	Dissertation proposal	EW is "daunting" because it is difficult to revise within allotted time.
Fu	Computer science	Dissertation proposal and questions based on the proposal	EW is "not challenging" because it is based on his published works.
Boren	Pharmacy	Non-thesis proposal	EW is "a rite of passage; no write, no pass."

Tong's story was slightly different. He did not find joy in the exam preparation process nor did he experience a sense of accomplishment after he completed his exam. He doubted whether it was "worthwhile" because the CE structure in his program keeps students' advisors out of the procedure and separates the connection between coursework and the dissertation. Under the circumstances, Tong's coping strategy was to cooperate with an American peer for the first part of the questions. They split the questions, drafted the answers, and discussed them. Tong noted that the exam writing was "demanding and stressful" for his American peer also. This corroborates previous findings regarding that writing for CE is not intuitive to L1 or L2 students (Diekelmann & Ironside, 1998; Lin, 2003). Transformation of learner agency will be discussed later.

Similarly, Enlai did not have a satisfying exam writing experience because his proposal was not well written, and it was criticized by one of his committee members. To meet the committee member's expectations, Enlai revised his proposal twice before his oral exam. His advisor suggested that Enlai combine the two revised versions. However, due to time constraints, Enlai was not able to create the third version. His coping strategy was to take the oral exam as a chance to clarify points that were not clearly stated in his writing.

Fu did not consider his exam writing as "challenging" because it was based on his published works. Fu was not overwhelmed by the two separate written portions, that is, the dissertation proposal and questions based on the proposal. When asked about how he managed to complete the writing, he mentioned three strategies: (1) consulting proposals written by lab peers who had already passed their CEs, (2) showing his proposal to an

American peer for a grammar check, and (3) showing his proposal to his advisor for feedback before distributing it to the committee.

Boren had to refer to the NIH grant proposal examples online to create a non-thesis proposal for the CE. It was Boren's first time writing a grant proposal. To familiarize himself with grant writing, he did the following: (1) read the grant guidelines and literature, (2) consulted a proposal written by one of his lab peers who had already passed her CE and discussed it with her, (3) conversed with those who were also preparing for their CEs at the same time, (4) showed the first part of his proposal (i.e., specific aims) to his advisor before he continued to write, and (5) consulted an American peer in his lab for a grammar check. According to Boren, his advisor considered the "CE as a test, a one-time thing" and noted that "this is not what you will pursue [for your dissertation]." Influenced by his advisor's attitude, Boren regarded exam writing as a rite of passage and knew that his proposal would not be carried out after he completed it.

In summary, some students played the games willingly and treated the examination as "a gateway experience into disciplinary enculturation" (Lin, 2003). However, others like Tong, played unwillingly because the new CE policy was too strict to negotiate and modify for dissertation purposes.

Selecting a Committee

To plan accordingly and to show deference to their advisors, four of the students reported that they consulted their advisors about selecting a committee.

Huan obtained her master's degree in the same program where she was enrolled for her doctoral study. For her master's thesis defense, she had a committee member who

was "very picky and aggressive." According to Huan, the committee member constantly requested to meet in person prior to her oral exam and challenged her with tough questions that could not all be dealt with in a master's thesis. Not familiar with Western critical thinking and debating, Huan was intimidated by the committee member and thought about quitting school at that time. For this reason, Huan was ambivalent about inviting the committee member for her candidacy exam. During the time Huan was preparing for her CE, she approached her advisor to discuss if they should keep the same committee member. As a reserved person, she was afraid to openly reject that committee member. Huan elicited her advisor's suggestions and noticed that her advisor responded indirectly. To her relief, her advisor suggested that Huan drop the committee member because they held conflicting views. Huan then invited another faculty member instead of the previous one.

Enlai described his process of forming the committee:

> Originally I had my own plan. But my advisor said that if I chose that person, he might be more critical. My advisor went on and said, "In order for you to complete your examination smoothly, I suggest that you replace one committee member with a Chinese professor because he might be more generous [merciful]."

Although this Chinese professor did not have a strong connection to Enlai's subject area of research, Enlai followed his advisor's suggestion and ended up inviting two Chinese faculty members.

Fu consulted his advisor about replacing a committee member who left before Fu started his exam. No one else in his program was doing research related to Fu's area in bioinformatics. Fu's advisor thus gave him some flexibility in inviting a committee member whose research area was not related to Fu's. Coming from Taiwan, Fu invited a faculty member from the same country who led a computer science laboratory. The faculty member showed his willingness to serve on Fu's committee, "to help a Taiwanese." Similar to Enlai, Fu sought a co-national to serve on his committee.

Boren followed his advisor's suggestions to form his committee. Boren invited a school dean, a doctor from a medical center, and a professor in pharmaceutics to serve on his committee. Boren met with his advisory committee twice: first, when he finished the specific aims and an abstract of the non-thesis proposal to obtain initial approval of the topic, and second, for his oral examination. Creating a non-thesis proposal that would not be carried out for his dissertation, Boren noticed that his advisory committee did not pay much attention to his proposal.

Like many doctoral students, whether they are L1 or L2, the four students spoke with their advisors about selecting the committee before they began their CEs. They understood that knowing the committee members' expectations was crucial because that might affect what they wanted to include in their exam texts.

Race against Time

During the time the students were taking their CEs, they also had to deal with multiple tasks similar to those experienced by the dissertation writers in Lundell and Beach's (2003) study. All students had their own duties as graduate administrative,

teaching, or research associates. To pass the examination, one not only required intellectual knowledge but also the ability to deal with time constraints and stress and anxiety incurred.

Boren negotiated with his advisor to reduce his frequency of lab experiments for four weeks to concentrate on his writing of the non-thesis proposal.

Huan condensed her work hours in the university library to allow herself some time to write her literature reviews. She recalled that among the four weeks of writing, she felt extremely nervous in the first week. She made phone calls to her father who served as a history professor in China and spoke with him as a way to organize her thoughts and release her stress.

Enlai did not expect that he would be required to rewrite his dissertation proposal after he distributed it to his committee members. Enlai's proposal topic was about commuting patterns and travel behavior in urban cities. To carry out the research, he needed to obtain approval for research with human subjects from the Initial Review Board (IRB). However, this was not taken into consideration in Enlai's proposal. Enlai's advisor did not notice this problem until the proposal was distributed. One of Enlai's committee members pointed out that Enlai did not complete the IRB process, and even if he had, the data collection process would be time-consuming. The committee member also asked Enlai to clarify how his sample represented the population. Enlai regarded having insufficient knowledge to revise his proposal as a "fiasco." Enlai was allotted 10 days to rewrite his proposal. He was attending a conference in another city, so he had to finish his proposal in the hotel. Enlai later reported that he would not have had this problem if his advisor had noticed the IRB omission earlier.

Fu pointed out his difficulty in accommodating one committee member's concern prior to the second part of his written exam (i.e., questions based on his dissertation proposal). One of Fu's committee members was not satisfied that he only had two days to read Fu's proposal and ask questions. Fu knew about the committee member's dissatisfaction, but he was not able to reschedule the exam dates. This could have been avoided if Fu and his advisor had discussed the exam timeframe in advance of the examination.

Although the situations these students encountered might seem trivial, they represent stressful situations doctoral students are likely to experience during their CE writing. Their personal experiences can provide insights for prospective students and faculty members who supervise international graduate students.

2.6 Discussion

My aim in this study was to provide L2 students' perspectives on the challenges of the CE and their strategies for winning the exam writing games. Although each case varied, this study does reveal similar issues across disciplines. All of the participants in this study won the game and became qualified members in their academic communities by negotiating rules and roles with different gatekeepers (i.e., the Graduate School, department, and advisory committee). They also learned to cope with stress and anxiety caused by time constraints and unexpected incidents during the exams.

In this study, what students were required to produce for their examinations was influenced by their departmental policies, as evidenced by the five examples. Required exam genres embody certain disciplinary values and expectations for doctoral candidates.

For example, students in public policy, sociology, and business administration are required to answer assigned questions based on a set of study questions formulated by their departmental programs. In contrast, students in geography, biophysics, computer science, nutrition, and mechanical engineering are required to write a dissertation proposal to demonstrate their ability to apply knowledge. Writing in response to assigned questions appears to be more rigorous with explicit and fixed rules that allow little room for changing the game. However, writing literature reviews or a proposal may be more loosely structured, allowing flexibility and negotiation of rules. No matter what the formats are, the students revealed that during their exam preparation, they tried to develop "a sense of rules" (Casanave, 2002) to determine whether the game was rigid or flexible. Departments that value assigned questions in the CE tend to use the same standards to evaluate every student. They seem to exert more power to assess students' abilities to become successful candidates and allow little space for learner agency. The students in assigned question groups appeared to be more reluctant to participate in their CEs than the other groups. Students like Tong resisted being a passive participant because conforming to the rules fully meant that he would "surrender his power" (Cheng, 2013). In contrast, departments that require students to write literature reviews or a proposal seem to value students' time spent on substantial reading or their abilities to apply existing knowledge to new research rather than merely reproducing knowledge from memory like the former students were expected to. These students were allowed more space to negotiate the rules and roles and were able to invest more time in communication and interaction with their advisory committee. This might better prepare them to transform from dependent to independent researchers.

The role of advisory committee in this study were revealed as crucial with regard to guiding and supporting students in the exam preparation process, as Lin (2003) described. Four of the five students' advisors initiated their students into exam preparation by informing them of the exam structure, possible timeline for completion, and potential research topics. They also met their committee members and gained oral feedback prior to or during writing. These interactions helped students know the CE genre and the expectations for it.

Furthermore, interacting with peers appeared to be beneficial in terms of gaining knowledge for exam writing and finding out implicit rules for the game. This finding is similar to those of studies on writing collaboration with peers on course papers (Casanave, 1995; Seloni, 2011; Cheng, 2013) or research publications (Blakeslee, 1997; Cho, 2004). In this study, Huan consulted a Korean peer who already passed her exam; Enlai asked his peers in his lab because his advisor did not tell him much about the exam; and Boren learned about the content and format of writing a non-thesis proposal mostly from peers in his lab, "from word of mouth," because his program only allowed "limited discussion with the advisor concerning the format of the proposal" (Pharmacy Handbook, 2012, p. 19). Tong studied exam questions with an American peer, while Fu practiced his oral exam in front of his lab peers. I also found that some students (Huan, Enlai, and Boren) tended to work with international students because they shared similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds, while others (Tong and Fu) tended to work with their lab peers regardless of their socio-linguistic backgrounds. I noticed that some exam takers (Fu and Boren) showed their proposals to their American peers who occasionally provide

convenient editing (Willey & Tanimoto, 2013). These students' experiences suggest that discussions with peers can help fill the gaps in knowledge and alleviate anxiety and stress caused by exam preparation. Consulting peers who passed their exams successfully allowed them to gain insiders' perspectives. This suggests that new learning is required for the candidacy exam. Study groups or exam preparation workshops can be helpful to exam takers for exchanging experiences, concerns, and insights.

Transformation of learner agency is worth discussion. Although Tong did not accept the rules, the coping strategy he adopted was to study with his American peer and discuss the exam questions together. Tong's powerless status did not allow him to modify the exam rules, but he learned that he had to "turn [his] frustration and anger into agency and action" (Cheng, 2013, p. 20) in order to survive the exam process. Tong's experience is consistent with Casanave's (2002) interpretation: "The players are constrained by game rules but [might] retain agency and intention that allow them to play strategically, stretching the game rules, finding inconsistencies and loopholes, and interpreting ambiguities in ways both reinforce and change the game" (p. xiv). This finding will be useful to prospective students.

2.7 Implications

In spite of the success of the five students in my study, there is a need to consider how to provide more support for L2 writers during the CE process. I worked with 29 students from 17 fields, all of whom met their goals. It is not clear how many L2 writers never complete their CEs, although in the particular departments or programs I worked with, most did. The aim of the study is not to blame individuals for the ways in which

they structure the CEs, but rather to have a chance to reflect on and react to a given tradition by thinking: How are particular gatekeeping criteria developed? How do the criteria impact writing and the lives of writers?

The issue under investigation is complex. I argue that perhaps understanding students' expectations prior to the exam might be helpful. For example, in the current study, students writing proposals indicated that they expected feedback from their advisors before they distributed their proposals to their committee. In this case, advisors and students should openly discuss their expectations for feedback. Moreover, program handbooks can be improved to help exam takers. Some students reported that they read the handbooks carefully and repeatedly but still had difficulties understanding the CE structure and expectations of the program. My own examination of graduate student program handbooks showed that they varied from 10 to 67 pages across the 17 disciplines. Some handbooks delineate the format and expectations for the written portion and resources students can use for exam writing, while others do not. It is suggested that the student handbooks be updated and presented in an explicit and readable format. The need to make exam tasks and writing conventions transparent is urgent. As Lillis and Turner (2001) note, "Whilst the student-writers knew that they were expected to write within a particular configuration of conventions, they were constantly struggling to find out what these conventions were" (p. 58). Becoming aware of students' needs and difficulties in the candidacy examination is the first step to helping students.

CHAPTER 3
DISSERTATION GRANT PROPOSALS AS "WRITING GAMES": AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES

We begin with the stated rules;
we discover other rules as we go along
(R. Gahringer, 1959, p. 662).

3.1 Introduction

A thesis/dissertation proposal can be thought of as "a contested site" (Cadman, 2002, p. 85) regarding how it is often used by graduate schools to assess students' abilities to conduct theses/dissertations. Recently in the US, in addition to writing dissertation proposals, more and more doctoral students are expected to participate in dissertation grant writing as a way to sell their ideas, obtain financial support, and gain recognition in their discourse community (Dong, 1998; Szelenyi, 2013). Compared to other academic writing, it is more challenging to write a dissertation grant proposal because it requires sharper insight and greater capability to identify a significant topic that presents advancement and originality of proposed research (Tardy, 2003). In addition, it is difficult because it must be written in a fairly persuasive manner to sell the proposed research to the invisible committee (Connor & Mauranen, 1999; Feng & Shi, 2004). Furthermore, it is arduous in terms of the page limit and guidelines that grant applicants

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must adhere for submissions. These factors create many challenges for students in identifying, preparing, and submitting dissertation grants. Thus, writing a grant proposal can be an ordeal for doctoral students, especially for second language (L2) speakers of English (Ding, 2008).

In English for Specific Purposes (ESP), there is a growing amount of research on L2 doctoral writing for course papers (Prior, 1991; Casanave, 1995; Seloni, 2011), theses/dissertations (Bunton, 1999; Belcher & Hirvela, 2005; Paltridge & Starfield, 2007), and dissertation proposals in particular (Prior, 1994; Cadman, 2002; Zhou, 2004). However, there has been a lack of attention to dissertation grant proposals and to ways of preparing L2 student grant writers for writing them.

As an international doctoral student, I personally have encountered challenges in writing dissertation grant proposals during the transition from PhD coursework to the dissertation. Thus, I conducted this study to investigate how international doctoral students learn to write the dissertation grant proposals, a genre that has been neglected in doctoral socialization. In this article, I examine two international doctoral students' writing experiences of dissertation grant proposals from two different disciplines: biophysics and musicology. The findings from this study can be useful to ESP instructors and dissertation advisors to better understand how to assist international graduate students when they prepare dissertation grant proposals.

3.2 Background to the Study

Influenced by doctoral coursework expectations, students' need to master the process of writing a dissertation grant proposal has become urgent in the US. Some doctoral programs have even begun to recommend that students refer to and apply for grant

proposals from major institutions such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH). These programs include pharmacy, nutrition, biophysics, (micro-)biology, and (bio-)chemistry, which are often categorized as physical and biological disciplines. For example, according to the student handbook in biophysics from the university studied, "students must refer to the NIH grant proposals to compose their dissertation proposals and submit them as the written portion of their candidacy examinations. Students are also encouraged to submit the proposal to funding agencies for support of their stipends" (Biophysics Handbook, 2008-2009, p. 42). This indicates that students are expected to practice writing grant proposals early and regularly before they graduate and before they become postdoctoral researchers, whose frequency of grant writing might be doubled or tripled to secure funds for laboratory operations (Ding, 2008; Strickland, 2008). This is similar to the situation of many students in the humanities and social sciences (Watts, 2006). For example, Hasche, Perron, and Proctor (2009) encourage social work students to make time for dissertation grants because they are important to "potential employers, provide a basis for future work, and prepare doctoral students for the competitive funding environment" (p. 340). Writing practices between a dissertation proposal and a dissertation grant proposal are intertwined. While students in sciences are allowed to apply for their dissertation grants prior to their candidacy examinations, students in humanities and social sciences generally start their applications after they pass their candidacy examinations.

The term "grant proposal" typically refers to a specific text submitted by prospective recipients in order to receive funding from private or public foundations for a specific

project. In this study, I use the term "grant proposal" to refer to the students' dissertation-related research plans or proposals required by major sources of funding.

3.3 Theoretical Considerations

Grant Proposal Writing as a Game-Like Situated Social Practice

The view of writing as situated social practice is related to the "social turn" in writing studies (Miller, 1994). It shifts away from the view that treats genres as simply textual artifacts and it regards writing as a way to master a certain genre through recurrent use of its conventionalized forms (Swales, 1990). The need to go from text to context to undertake a more comprehensive and critical view of discursive practices of writing has been emphasized in recent ESP and New Rhetoric studies (Ivanic, 1998; Hirvela & Belcher, 2001; Canagarajah, 2002; Tardy, 2006; Bhatia, 2008; Johns, 2011). Aligned with the social turn, Freadman (1994) points out that a text is the output of a set of rules. A genre involves writers learning the rules of the game, understanding what roles the participants can play, and then practicing the skills until they can play appropriately. Games like tennis and football differ because of rules. Rules can be viewed as a way for how to play rather than what lead to an outcome. Rules also enable and disable players from participating in certain practices of the game. A game consists of the practice of its rules, including activities surrounding the actual game (warm-up, opening and closing rituals).

More recently, Casanave (2002) presents a view of *writing games*. Casanave indicates, "writing consist[s] of rule- and strategy-based practices, done in interaction with others for some kind of personal and professional gain, and that it is learned through repeated practice rather than just from a guidebook of how to play" (p. 3). This study is

exploratory in nature with regard to the application of writing games. I applied this notion to examine how L2 doctoral students learned to play the writing games of dissertation grant proposals. Grant writing is game-like because there are specific rules to learn such as conventions and criteria (text-internal) as well as eligibility, funding priorities, and deadline (text-external; see Bhatia's distinction, 2008). The practice of these rules is important prior to and during the game. However, these often create stakes for L2 students as novice players. To write a good grant proposal, students must develop strategies such as reviewing examples of grant proposals, rewriting the proposals, and seeking feedback from their advisors or professors. A grant proposal is usually submitted with other materials. After submission, one game ends. Since only a small number of grants are funded by major funders like those examined in this study, grant writers are aware of high rejection rates. One can decide to join another game by applying for a different grant. One may also join the same game twice for a new application or manage reviewers' comments and resubmit if it is permitted. A new game begins because rules differ in a new application or resubmission. For resubmission, one needs to pay particular attention to the funder's resubmission guidelines and reviewers' feedback. Figure 3.1 below presents the process.
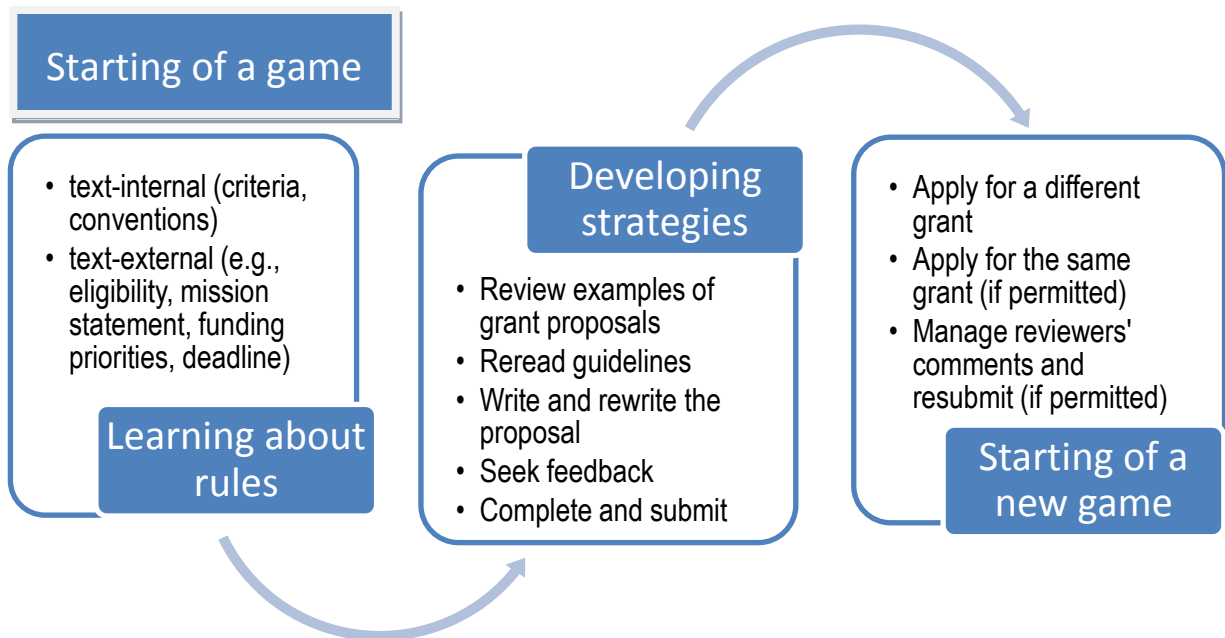
Figure 3.1 Dissertation Grant Proposals as Writing Games

Research on Grant Proposal Writing

Two approaches to the genre of grants have been adopted in previous studies: rhetorical analysis versus context-sensitive analysis of texts. The former strand of research has been dominated by Swales's (1990) "moves" analysis in identifying genre features and rhetorical patterns in grant proposals in various disciplines (Connor & Mauranen, 1999; Connor, 2000; Connor & Upton, 2004; Feng & Shi, 2004; Koutsantoni, 2009).

Relevant to this study is the latter strand of scholarship advanced by New Rhetoric (e.g., Myers, 1985; 1990) and ESP professionals (e.g., Tardy, 2003; 2011; Strickland, 2008). Rather than focusing on the linguistic elements of a particular genre, these researchers focus on writers' interactions with the same genre across contexts influenced

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by individual goals, values, and attitudes (Tardy, 2011). In this perspective, the genre of a grant proposal becomes fluid, complex, and multimodal (Molle & Prior, 2008). Approaches such as case studies and ethnographies have been used to study genres by drawing the connections among the textual, social, and political dimensions of writing. For example, Myers (1985) examines how two experienced biology professors revised their grant proposals, presented their persona, and negotiated their relationship with the literature of their disciplinary communities.

Aligned with the view of writing as social practice, in this study, dissertation grant proposals are treated not as a single genre but as *genre systems* (Bazerman, 1994). Originally, genre is referred to as text types (letters, research articles, and recipes) or text structures (narration, description, and exposition; Hyland, 2004a, p. 28). Genre systems or genre sets refer to the interactions of genres in specific settings or contexts (Bazerman, 1994; Paré, 2000; Devitt, 2004). For example, Bazerman (1994) examined the writing of patents and found that a patent consists not of a single-genre document, but of a legal activity. This view is useful for exploring how L2 student grant writers participate in communications of various kinds of texts such as grant guidelines, Web pages, and application materials. Integrating with the game metaphor, this study examines how L2 students learn to play writing games in specific grant genre systems.

The majority of research on grant writing has focused on faculty's written texts (Connor & Mauranen, 1999; Connor & Upton, 2004; Feng & Shi, 2004; Hyon & Chen, 2004; Koutsantoni, 2009) or writing processes (Myers, 1985; 1990; Tardy, 2003; Strickland, 2008). Only one study, conducted by Ding (2008), has investigated how both L1 and L2 graduate students were initiated into the discourse community of NIH grants.

Although Ding's study sheds light on grant writing research, she only examined grant writing in the sciences. She did not explore the nature of grant writing in the humanities as examined by this study.

In sum, much of the literature focuses on faculty writing grants. How graduate students experience grant writing, particularly a dissertation grant proposal, has received less attention. Faculty grant writing varies to a great extent from student grant writing depending on funding purposes, disciplines, geographical locations, and grant guidelines. In addition, student grant writing can vary across or within disciplines depending on funding purposes and research goals (e.g., conference travel grants, (non-)thesis/dissertation fellowships). It appears necessary to consider the difficulties L2 students encounter while preparing for dissertation grant proposals. Given that the number of Chinese-speaking students studying in US universities for their doctoral degrees has steadily increased, these students may face challenges in understanding the expectations and demands of grant writing. Insights into these students' writing practices should be useful to ESP instructors and dissertation advisors.

3.4 The Study

This study took place at a US Midwestern research university (November 2011 to March 2013). I adopted a case study approach, also used by Myers (1985), to explore two L2 graduate students' dissertation grant writing practices. To compare the differences of dissertation grant writing across disciplines, I selected one participant from "hard" sciences (biophysics) and one from "soft" sciences (musicology) (see categorization in Becher & Trowler, 2001). I invited them to participate in my study because they revealed challenges in writing dissertation grant proposals. More crucially, I chose to work with

them because their experiences represented the transitional writing processes from doctoral coursework to the dissertation. Influenced by their departmental requirements, Wenli submitted her dissertation proposal for her candidacy examination while Huan started writing her proposal after she passed her candidacy examination. In Wenli's program, students must write a dissertation grant proposal by referring to the NIH grant guidelines, and defend the proposal in their candidacy examinations. However, in Huan's case, her department did not ask candidates to defend their proposals before they undertook their dissertations, and thus she took the opportunity of grant writing to visualize her dissertation. Table 3.1 provides the participants' backgrounds.

Table 3.1 Participants' Backgrounds

	Field of study	Origin	Gender	Time in US	Grants applied for
Wenli	Bio-physics	Taiwan	Female	4 yrs	1 (American Heart Association in the US)
Huan	Musi-cology	China	Female	6 yrs	2 (Chiang-Ching Kuo Foundation in Taiwan, American Council of Learned Societies in the US)

*Note: Wenli made her first submission in 2011 and resubmitted in 2012.

Wenli's Profile

Wenli completed her undergraduate study in physics in Taiwan and embarked on her graduate study in biophysics at the US university in 2008. Wenli had a moderate level of English writing ability in terms of her writing scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language Internet-based Test (TOEFL-iBT: 22/30) and General Record Examination (GRE: 3/6) taken prior to her graduate school enrollment. She was required to study writing for two quarters in the English as a Second Language (ESL) composition program of the university. However, she did not think the courses were helpful for professional writing in her field. Wenli studied English for 11 years in Taiwan, but she had limited experience with academic writing in English in her undergraduate study because taking standardized English tests was the norm to fulfill the course requirements. In her program, writing research grants was a common practice, but she rarely received systematic training in this genre. The only grant writing training she had was two seminar sessions arranged by her program. As she recalled, she learned how to write a short proposal and then exchanged it with her peers for feedback; however, Wenli considered this practice insufficient. Wenli's advisor was the primary person who was able to guide her through the grant writing process. She applied for a predoctoral fellowship funded by the American Heart Association (AHA) two years in a row (in 2011 and 2012). Wenli applied for the AHA predoctoral fellowship rather than other funding provided by the NIH because this was one of the few sources of financial assistance available for international students holding an F-1 student visa and because it was well-known in her field. Unfortunately, her proposal was rejected on her first submission (the average success rate was only 32.4%, or 44 out of 136 applications). With her advisor's help,

Wenli revised the proposal and resubmitted it. Among the other three student applicants in her laboratory, Wenli was the only one who successfully obtained the grant despite the fact that the rate decreased to 16.9% for all submissions in 2012.

Huan's Profile

Huan obtained her bachelor's degree in media studies in China. She began her master's study in music in 2005 and has pursued a doctoral degree in the same program since 2007. Huan was an advanced writer in terms of her writing scores on the TOEFL-iBT (26/30) and GRE (5/6). As in Wenli's case, Huan was placed in a mandatory advanced ESL composition course in her first year of study, and her department did not offer classes for student grant writers either. Unlike Wenli, Huan took other elective courses related to conference paper and research article writing in the ESL program, but none were directly related to grant writing. During the time she was interviewed, Huan was invited by a journal editor to submit a manuscript based on her paper presented at a renowned conference in her field in the US. Her publications have included a journal article, a book review, and some conference papers, though she had never written a grant proposal until she started to apply for the grants. Two factors triggered Huan to apply for grants: (1) the personal challenge of and motivation for completing her dissertation project; and (2) the need for financial support during her dissertation writing stage. Huan applied for dissertation completion grants from the Chiang-Ching Kuo Foundation (CCK) in Taiwan and Mellon/American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) in the US. Huan applied for these two grants because of their similarities in funding purposes and application documents. The CCK Foundation supports research related to Chinese

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studies, while the ACLS focuses on studies in humanities and related social sciences. In the end, Huan did not receive either grant in spite of her extensive writing experiences.

3.5 Data Sources and Analysis

The data analysis and interviews with students were parallel. For more than one year, I conducted multiple interviews with Wenli and Huan respectively. All interviews were conducted in Mandarin Chinese, a native language shared by the researcher and participants. Each interview was audio-recorded, transcribed, and selectively translated into English for inclusion in this paper. The interviews were semi-structured and text-based. I invited the participants to bring their grant proposals and related documents to discuss. All the interviews were conducted after the participants submitted their proposals and after Wenli's resubmission. I conducted member checks to verify the accuracy of the information presented in this paper. A constant comparison method was adopted. Interviews were triangulated with multiple sources (e.g., students' email correspondences with their advisor and other professors, revised proposals over time, researcher's field notes; see details in Appendix G). Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted. Following the methods of Myers (1985) and Strickland (2008), I highlighted and quantified changes between each student's proposals. I also paid attention to the students' email exchanges with their advisors and senior members because those were part of the webs of texts that seemed to influence their proposal revisions. Since the funding agencies had specific guidelines, I analyzed the texts to determine if all the requirements were met.

3.6 Findings

A general overview reveals four stages the two students experienced in their grant writing processes: warm-up, game one, game two, and game over. I will first present Wenli's story and then Huan's.

Wenli's Story

Wenli developed her knowledge for the grant genre and the AHA funding system through repeated reading of guidelines for submission, consulting a postdoctoral researcher in her lab, and working with her advisor. Her first submission was unsuccessful. In the following year, she faced the challenge of deciding between a new application or resubmission. She met with three senior members in her field and asked their advice. She reported to her advisor and decided to revise and resubmit the proposal. Ultimately, Wenli obtained the fellowship. Grant writing helped her to see the big picture of her dissertation project. In the following, I describe Wenli's grant application process.

Warm-Up

In her first year of study, Wenli's advisor suggested she practice applying for the grant. Wenli read the guidelines and wrote a rough draft but was unable to meet the deadline.

Game One

Her second year was her first attempt to apply officially. When asked about how she came to understand the predoctoral fellowship guidelines, Wenli noted,

> I was not clear at first. I opened the Webpage and read the guidelines regarding each required document [for submission]. I read them line by line. I paid a lot of

attention to the template [see Appendix H] for creating the research plan. (Interview, 11/24/2012) (W1)

When Wenli had questions, she would turn to her peers for help. Almost every student in her department had the experience of applying for this fellowship. She consulted a postdoctoral researcher in her lab and read the research plan and training/career goals that the researcher submitted previously.

For her first submission, Wenli was confident and had a clear understanding of the review procedure:

> The AHA would assign 2 to 3 people to review the proposal based on the applicant's official transcript, research area, the applicant's advisor's backgrounds and whether the advisor would be able to support you financially for research….They [the reviewers] look at you, not only scientifically [individual research ability], but also your potential and ***your advisor's sponsorship.*** (Interview, 4/14/2012; emphasis added) (W2)

Wenli's experience is in accordance with the AHA requirement that before writing the grant proposal, "new fellows [should] receive wise counsel and direction from an established investigator interested in the conduct and progress of the research project during the research training period. Each fellow must have a sponsor" (Winter 2013 Predoctoral Fellowship: Program Description, Eligibility, and Peer Review Criteria). Therefore, Wenli worked on the revisions of her research plan with her advisor,

completing 10 drafts between December 2010 and January 2011 (the submission deadline was 1/12/2011.) The first draft of her research plan was 11 pages and then reduced to eight pages, single-spaced for submission. The entire research plan consisted of these parts: Specific Aims, Background and Significance, Preliminary Studies, Research Design and Methods, Expected Results and Potential Experimental Problems, and Ethical Aspects of the Proposed Research.

In spite of their hard work, Wenli's first submission was unsuccessful. Wenli received two reviewers' comments evaluating the proposal, investigator, and sponsor (a total of five pages). Regarding the overall evaluations, Reviewer One's comments seemed rather negative:

> …the proposal has serious flaws. While it focuses on the …, it fails to discriminate between therapeutic and toxic effects of CGs. The application should first define the concentration that is considered therapeutic … In Figure 5, … the concentration is not given so we don't know if we are in the therapeutic or the toxic range...The applicant ignores the literature concerning … The proposed experiments are not objectively crafted to critically test the hypothesis. The significance of the studying CG toxicity should not be oversold. (Reviewer One's comments, May 2011)

When asked about how she felt towards the feedback, Wenli replied:

> Very upset. When I read the long comments, I understood the reviewer had positive comments on me as a researcher and my advisor as a trainer. However, the reviewer said the study had no significance. No one uses this drug … Because he is [might be] a doctor, he has more clinical experience. When I first read the comments, I felt so upset. I felt my work was useless. He suggested we give up the drug, but my proposal is all about the drug … My paper was thrown away and not even given a score. It was sifted out. I felt so sad. (Interview, 4/14/2012) (W3)

However, the other reviewer was more optimistic about her research, saying, "Very significant …. The results may suggest new strategies for enhancing the utility of these agents in treating heart failure" (Reviewer Two's comments, May 2011).

The experience that Wenli had was not unusual. Writers like Wenli applying for the NIH grants often have to cope with stress and emotions caused by feedback from reviewers. Overwhelmed by the comments, Wenli did not know what to do and was unable to defend herself against the comments. Wenli lost her game despite how hard she played it by the rules. While she was discouraged, she received a review notification regarding her first paper in collaboration with her advisor. It required immediate revisions, and the reviewers' comments were fairly positive. Her coping strategy at that time was to concentrate on revising the paper and set the grant proposal aside for a while. She thought to herself, "It's okay if I don't get the grant. My advisor will fund me. [Revising] this paper is more important." (Interview, 4/14/2012)

Game Two

During the following year, Wenli faced a new challenge: a new application or resubmission? Wenli could not begin her grant writing until she determined what to do. She commented,

> If it is too difficult to respond to the reviewers' comments, I will just change the title of the proposal and then make it a new application. If I decided to resubmit, I will have to respond to the reviewer's comments. (Interview, 4/14/2012) (W4)

To Wenli, it was a difficult decision. She needed to reevaluate her chances to win the grant writing game. Her advisor suggested Wenli contact three professors in the university who were experienced AHA grant reviewers. Wenli was familiar with two of them; one served on her dissertation committee, and the other collaborated with her on research. Wenli never met the third professor before, so her advisor helped make arrangements for them to meet. Although Wenli resisted resubmission, in her mind she knew she had to change her attitude and take a proactive role. She was determined to participate in the game again and decided to ask the professors in detail about what to pay attention to and how to respond to Reviewer One's comments. One of the professors suggested a new application, while the other two were in favor of resubmission. After some discussion, Wenli and her advisor decided to resubmit their research plan. Wenli remarked:

Resubmissions have higher chances of being accepted. [Two] professors said that according to the success rates in the past few years, there is a greater possibility of acceptance for resubmissions than new applications. (Interview, 4/14/2012) (W5)

Game Over

Wenli began to work with her advisor on their response to Reviewer One's comments and completed four revisions between December 2011 and January 2012. According to Wenli, it was her first time writing a response letter. As a novice, Wenli wrote an initial draft but relied on her advisor for revisions, and the advisor deleted or paraphrased several sentences in the first paragraph to improve the wording. Regarding her research plan for resubmission, Wenli and her advisor made all the changes suggested, focusing on Reviewer One's comments presented earlier and the suggestions made by the three professors. After about 10 revisions, the structure in these drafts appeared to be the same as the one submitted earlier conforming to the instructions provided by the agency. Changes made by Wenli's advisor were mostly on the knowledge level instead of the language level. When asked about her advisor's role in the grant proposal writing process, Wenli commented:

> He is a [good] writer. I drafted, and he revised. He helped me a lot on the revisions. When my first application was rejected, he encouraged me. He knew if I tried again, I would get it [the award] as resubmission (Interview, 11/24/2012) (W6)

As noted earlier, Wenli obtained the fellowship after her resubmission. I asked her how grant writing helped with her dissertation development. She noted it helped her "to organize her ideas, to connect the research story and sell the story," and she further commented, "if I didn't write down the ideas [through grant applications], I wouldn't know about the research direction" (Interview, 11/24/2012).

Huan's story

Huan experienced two writing games, the Chiang-Ching Kuo Doctoral Fellowship (CCK) in Taiwan and the American Council of Learned Societies in the US (ACLS), almost at the same time. A few rules distinguished Huan's practices for these two games: (1) page limit of a proposal (CCK: 7 pages single-spaced; ACLS: 5 pages double-spaced); and (2) a completed chapter of the dissertation required by ACLS. She researched online through repeated reading of guidelines for submission and past awardees' backgrounds and dissertation topics to further understand the funding agencies' expectations (see the guidelines in Appendix I). Huan faced great challenges in writing to meet the guidelines and had to ask her advisor and other professionals, including an ESL instructor, for assistance. Unexpectedly, she had difficulty in accommodating the divergent opinions of her advisor and the ESL instructor. Although Huan did not obtain either fellowship, she learned much about the process of writing a grant proposal.

Warm-Up

Huan learned about the two grants through different resources. She heard of the CCK fellowship from a bulletin board in the East Asian Department at her university and her

roommate who studied in the East Asian Department; and the ACLS fellowship by typing the keywords "dissertation fellowship" into *Google*. (Interview, 11/28/2012) (H1)

When asked if she consulted her advisor regarding the sources of American-based dissertation fellowships, she replied,

> No. He [advisor] knew nothing about this. He didn't even know about the ACLS fellowship. The only thing he was familiar with was the American Musicological Society (AMS) grants and fellowships. (Interview, 11/28/2012) (H2)

Lacking her advisor's guidance, Huan did her research online and developed criteria to tease out possible grants to apply for before she started to write the proposals. Huan avoided applying for grants like those from the AMS (familiar to her advisor) because of (1) the organization's lack of interest in non-Western music topics (Huan's topic was related to the role of women in Chinese film music), (2) tendency to award students from prestigious universities such as Ivy League schools, (3) the highly competitive process, and (4) many hidden rules for writing a good proposal. Huan was being selective about her dissertation fellowships and evaluated carefully whether there was a match between her dissertation topic and the mission of the grant agency.

Game One

Huan spent time navigating the funding agencies' Webpages. Her interactions with the genre systems and proposal writing were both recursive and discursive. For example, Huan paid particular attention to past awardees' dissertation topics, areas of interests, and universities to understand reviewers' possible interests in dissertation topics and

awardees' backgrounds. She examined closely whether past awards only went to Ivy League university students to evaluate her chances for receiving the awards. In addition, since the CCK Foundation had both English and Chinese Webpages, she skimmed all the relevant information listed to learn more about the grant for which she intended to apply.

I observed Huan's application processes from beginning to end, when the application results were released. I noticed that she was daunted by having to negotiate two sets of genre systems. The CCK application consisted of a proposal, two recommendation letters, a departmental letter demonstrating proof of candidacy, and Ph.D. transcript, while the ACLS application required a proposal, an application form, two recommendation letters, a project timeline, a completed chapter of the dissertation, and a bibliography. Huan had to prepare two grant proposals almost simultaneously because the deadlines were only nine days apart (CCK: 10/15/2011, ACLS: 10/24/2011). Huan tried hard to familiarize herself with the guidelines. Although there were slight differences, the two funding agencies shared similar evaluation criteria: (1) advancement of research, (2) quality of the proposal, and (3) likelihood of completing the dissertation during the grant period.

Dealing with the complex genre systems and high-stakes proposal writing tasks, Huan interacted with different members in her discourse community for their insights into her proposals. However, it appears that it was not only Huan who had to familiarize herself with the guidelines, but also the four senior members she consulted for feedback on her proposals. Being aware that the faculty members might not be familiar with the fellowships for which she intended to apply, Huan indicated the guidelines in her emails:

About this proposal revision, I am concerned about ***whether my proposal***

highlights and satisfies the requirement of the [CCK] fellowship…I am not sure

whether I should change the beginning part by directly speaking something like

"my dissertation will demonstrate blah blah..." Therefore, I hope you can ***give me***

some feedback about the structure and organization of my proposal (Original

email to Prof. S., 9/20/2011).

Huan expected to receive the professor's feedback on the organization of her proposal;

however, the professor did not provide any specific feedback regarding this aspect.

Rather, more feedback was given in terms of the title, word choice, definitions of terms,

and methodology. Similarly, other professors, including Huan's advisor, did not offer any

feedback on the structure of her proposal. Huan knew she had to make changes in the

organization on her own. She located some proposal examples online and studied them.

Table 3.2 provides an overview of the changes in the organization of Huan's CCK

proposal over time.

Table 3.2 Changes in the Organization of Huan's CCK Proposal (emphasis added)

CCK Proposal to Prof. S (Email attachment: 9/20/2011)	CCK Proposal to Prof. M (Email attachment: 9/27/2011)	CCK Proposal corrected by Advisor (Email attachment: 10/14/2011)
1. Intro	1. Intro	1. Intro
2. Methodological issues	*2. Background*	*2. Background*
3. The Significance of My Dissertation	*3. Goals*	*3. Goals for Research*
4. Timeline	*4. Potential Significance*	*4. Significance of Research*
	5. Timeline	5. Timeline
	6. Abstract	*6. Abstract*

In addition, Huan sought help from an ESL instructor but she encountered some difficulties. Huan relied on the ESL instructor for correcting her language programs but she did not realize that changes made in her proposal would cause her advisor's confusion. Huan was unable to develop agency for accommodating the ESL instructor's and her advisor's opinions as a novice grant writer. Like many L2 students, Huan was confronted by conflicting expectations of readers (Hansen, 2000). During that time, Huan had several face-to-face meetings with the ESL instructor. In contrast, Huan only showed the CCK proposal to her advisor twice, once as a first draft and the second time as the final version. Therefore, the drastic language changes might have caused her advisor's confusion. Huan later realized and commented:

I should accept his [ESL instructor's] suggestions selectively... At first I thought

his expertise is in second language academic writing and I should not doubt what

he says. Later I realized this was not right. (Interview, 11/27/2011) (H3)

Game Two

With the aforementioned realization, when composing the ACLS proposal, Huan

took her advisor's feedback into primary consideration and the ESL instructor's

suggestions as secondary because her advisor had more authority and better knowledge

on grant genres in humanities. Moreover, Huan shortened her CCK proposal for the

ACLS submission. Huan's final versions of the two proposals were seven pages, single-

spaced (CCK proposal) and five pages, double-spaced (ACLS proposal). Huan found it

more challenging to write a shorter proposal and made the following changes for the

ACLS proposal: (1) deleted words in the introduction, and (2) synthesized the literature

review by leaving some authors' names in the citations without giving in-depth

delineations of their research. Due to time constraints, Huan spent less time on the ACLS

proposal than the CCK proposal.

Game Over

In the end, Huan did not obtain the two fellowships despite her intense effort to meet

the guidelines. The results of her applications were revealed in March (ACLS) and May

2012 (CCK), about six months after her submissions. Huan was upset when she was

notified about the results of her applications, saying, "I wish I could get the dissertation

scholarships. Those were huge amounts of money" (Informal chat, 3/9/2012). Huan and I

went through the CCK awardees' list together, and she commented, "It seems like all the

topics are political- or economical-oriented" (Informal chat, 3/9/2012), indicating the

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possible reason for her failure. In a later interview, when I asked her about her advisor's role in dissertation grant proposal mentoring, she commented,

> The major role my advisor played was correcting grammar and [supervising] the writing [quality]. He [didn't care about] the organization or how I composed. He wouldn't change the structure unless I made a big mistake ... My advisor has shared responsibility for my failures [Laugh]. He said he is good at writing books not grants. He suggested I consult another teacher in my department because the teacher has got a lot of grants. (Interview, 11/28/2012). (H4)

Huan also indicated other factors that might have hampered her from obtaining the grants, such as an unsatisfactory grade on her transcript submitted to the CCK, the fact that the chapter excerpt submitted to the ACLS was still going through major revisions at that time, and challenges in requesting a recommendation letter from a well-known scholar in her field. Here is a summary of her overall reflections on the grant writing processes:

1. I could not see the picture of my dissertation, and that influenced my grant proposal writing. What I was thinking at that time was different from what I am thinking now…[Writing a] proposal was like bullshit[ing] [Laugh]…Even though I failed, I understood what it was like to write a grant proposal. (Interview, 11/28/2012).

2. The two proposals were not well written. Neither of them indicated how I would select cases, themes, and video excerpts for analysis in methodology (Interview, 4/6/2012).

3. The proposals did not consist of clarifications for audience like the general public, nor did they explain the organization of the study very well. (Email correspondence, 8/10/2012)

Summary of the Two Students' Grant Writing Stages

Table 3.3 below presents a summary of the two students' grant writing stages. Both students experienced finding out the game rules, probing gatekeepers' interests, and developing strategies to play their games; however, Wenli won, and Huan lost.

Table 3.3 Summary of Grant Writing Stages by Two Students

Stages	Wenli in biophysics	Huan in musicology
Warm-up	Observing how to play the AHA game	Evaluating her research interests and picking her battles
	Playing it by rules and following the template	Interpreting the rules and creating her own templates
Game one	1st submission: rejected	Writing the CCK proposal:
	Reading reviewers' comments	obtaining feedback from four senior members
Game two	2nd submission: new application or resubmission? Consulting three senior members and evaluating chances to win	Synthesizing the CCK proposal for ACLS submission by consulting ESL instructor
Game over	Won the game: accepting the award	Lost the game: reflecting and moving forward

3.7 Discussion

This section offers responses to the research questions, discussions of findings in relation to the literature, and suggestions for ESP instructors and dissertation advisors.

Developing Knowledge for the Grant Genres and the Genre Systems

The findings show grant writers not only need to develop knowledge for writing the grant proposal, but also knowledge for understanding the funding system, which is in accordance with several previous studies (Connor, 2000; Tardy, 2003; Strickland, 2008). In this study, the two students developed their knowledge for the grant genres through different resources: (1) the guidelines and materials provided by the funding agencies, (2) the agencies' Websites and mission statements, (3) discussions with their advisors and senior members in their communities for feedback on proposals and to solicit recommendation letters, and (4) their multiple proposal drafts and other related documents. Wenli read the guidelines and materials provided by the funding agency repeatedly. Huan studied past awardees' backgrounds and dissertation topics online to better understand the funding agencies' expectations. Huan and Wenli both looked for coaches and discussed strategies with them to win the games. These coaches became their think tanks similar to the "literacy brokers" in Lillis and Curry's (2006) study, offering insights or criticism on their proposals or helping evaluate their chances to win.

Challenges Faced and Support Received as Novice Players

It was found that both students' grant proposal writing practices were greatly influenced by the guidelines, which corresponds to Casanave's (2002) concept of writing games. In this study, the two students had to play the grant application games by following the rules rigorously, resulting in the feelings of anxiety and frustration often

faced by novice grant writers (Ding, 2008), including faculty writers (Myers, 1985; Connor, 2000; Tardy, 2003; Strickland, 2008).

Instructions provided by the funding agencies had a great impact on the students' proposal writing practices. In Wenli's case, specific instructions regarding what must be stated in the research plan were provided. Owing to the explicit instructions, it was discovered that fewer changes were made in the subheadings of Wenli's research plans over time. The instructions functioned like templates that international students in ESL writing programs often refer to during their composing processes (Macbeth, 2010). Replying based on the instructions and discussions with senior members made it convenient for Wenli to write. In contrast, Huan had to start from scratch because there were no specific instructions or templates to use as a reference from the two funding agencies. As shown in Table 3.2, the subheadings in her CCK proposal experienced significant changes through her multiple revisions. This finding implies that ESP courses should encompass discipline-specific training for grant proposal macrostructures and raise students' awareness of funding agencies' criteria.

Learning from Grant Writing

It is noticeable that the guidelines influenced the applicants' levels of participation and frequency of interactions with their advisors. In Wenli's case, her application to the AHA was judged by the criteria involving a close collaboration between student and advisor. Concerning feedback on grant proposals and application materials, Wenli had more email correspondence with her advisor (N=15 in first submission, 22 in resubmission) than Huan did (N=2, not including chats during her advisor's office hours). According to Wenli, although her and her advisor's email messages tended to be very

brief (a few only had attached files without messages), they sometimes had several exchanges during the day and could extend their discussions orally when in their laboratory. In contrast, Huan did not have as much collaboration or interaction with her advisor for her grant proposals, which may be attributed to the lack of regulation by the criteria or the distinct disciplinary culture in the humanities. Huan indicated jokingly that her advisor had to take shared responsibility for her failures in the two grant applications. However, due to her advisor's lack of involvement, Huan had to seek comments from other senior members, both inside and outside her campus, including the ESL writing instructor. This indicates that academic advisors need to be more aware of students' dissertation grant applications. It is suggested that advisors can help students frame their interests or choose a dissertation topic to match the funding priorities. Moreover, they can encourage students to use course papers to develop a strong argument for the proposal and explain why the dissertation work is needed to fill gaps in knowledge.

Comparing these two cases, the mentoring patterns seem to differ to some extent. Similar to Ding's (2008) findings, for the most part, Wenli was facilitated by her advisor and senior faculty on how the funding system operated and what research directions would be expected by the funding agency. Senior members gradually inducted Wenli to fully participate in the genre system. However, Huan had to spend more time conveying what she knew to the faculty, such as grant guidelines. In Huan's case, it was the novice who engaged the senior members to gradually participate in the two systems. This finding suggests that when senior members are familiar with the funding system, they tend to offer more guidance on students' grant writing. In contrast, if they know little about the funding agency, they might need more time to become familiar with the system and tend

to let students lead during the process. Regardless of the difference, it is suggested that students seek input for refining and clarifying the research aims, use of theory, and methods (Hasche, Perron, & Proctor, 2009).

Previous research has examined the relationship between writing scores for admission and writing issues faced by international graduate students (Belcher, 1994; Leki, 1995; Schneider & Fujishima, 1995). In this study, the two students were proficient language learners in terms of their writing scores, email writing skills, and publications. Whether the students were able to obtain grants could not be directly predicted from their language proficiency scores. However, we can speculate on the reasons for Wenli's success and Huan's failure. First, Wenli was successful because of her early socialization into the funding system. Influenced by her departmental expectation, Wenli warmed up for game one the year before she had her first submission. She observed the grant guidelines and had chances to talk to the students who applied for the same grant in her lab. She was writing her research plan not only for the grant application but also for the written portion of her candidacy examination. In contrast, Huan's department did not require or encourage students to refer to grant guidelines while composing their dissertation grant proposals. Huan applied for the grants to meet her personal challenges rather than departmental requirements. This indicates that departmental requirements have an impact on students' socialization into the funding system. Second, eligibility requirements can be discussed in relation to their application outcomes. Wenli's funding agency did not set the limitations to pre-candidates. However, Huan had to wait until she became a doctoral candidate to apply for the dissertation fellowships. Like most dissertation grant applicants in the humanities, Huan could only apply once and was not

allowed to resubmit. For this reason, Wenli had an extra chance that Huan did not. This suggests that in biological sciences, students are expected to enculturate into independent research by writing grants earlier than those in the humanities. Last, the provision of reviewers' comments is worth discussing. Unlike Wenli, Huan was not able to learn from her failures because no reviewers' comments were provided. The absence of feedback may have impeded Huan from improving her proposals. It is suggested that reviewers' comments are beneficial for later improvement on a proposal, even if it is not awarded.

3.8 Limitations and Future Research

To gain a deeper understanding, future ESP research could investigate more closely grant writers' composing and interaction processes. First, since the current research only examines the students' perspectives, future research can include interviews with faculty for more in-depth insights into the collaboration. Second, more research is needed to examine how students are initiated into or participate in the grant applications system. For example, the major funders in the US include the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH); NAEd Spencer Dissertation Fellowships and Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad (DDRA) in education; and the National Science Foundation (NSF), National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Academies, and Department of Energy (DOE) in the sciences (see more in Grants.gov). In Canada, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) is one of the major funders (Feng & Shi, 2004), and in the UK, two of the major funders are the Economic and Social Science Research Council (ESRC) and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) (Koutsantoni, 2009).

3.9 Conclusion and Implications

This study aims to enrich the ESP literature on grant proposal writing. The two students' narratives reveal that grant writing is like playing writing games, where writers have to follow a set of rules and develop strategies, such as rereading the guidelines, rewriting the proposals, and working closely with senior members. Despite the outcomes of their applications, both students learned how to play the games as competent grant writers who have the potential to make advancements in research and produce proposals with high quality. More crucially, their learning continued, even when the games ended. During their transitions from coursework to the dissertation stage, the students became clear about their dissertation projects through grant writing. The findings also suggest that it would be beneficial if ESP instructors and dissertation advisors could provide students with training and guidance for the various grant genres. Genre analysis of sample grant proposals can provide novice writers a basic understanding through practicing analyzing the rhetorical features. Moreover, ESP courses should encompass training for the macrostructures of grant proposals and raise students' awareness of grant guidelines.

CHAPTER 4
GENERAL CONCLUSION

A good game can be a relaxation and a pleasure;
but it would be a mistake to put it down as an entertainment
(R. Gahringer, 1959, p. 662)

This chapter presents an overview of the two previous chapters by highlighting the findings and pedagogical implications. At the end of this chapter, I discuss limitations of the two studies and suggest recommendations for future research.

4.1 Summary of Findings

During the past few years, researchers have categorized doctoral education into different socialization stages. More recently, Gardner (2008a) classified three major phases in terms of students' programmatic, relational, and personal experiences: (1) Phase I: admission, beginning coursework, qualifying exam, assistantship, (2) Phase II: completing coursework examinations, and (3) Phase III: candidacy: research proposal, and dissertation research. Among the three stages, Gardner found that students' difficulties and needs during the transition from coursework to the dissertation stage (from Phases II to III) are more obvious than during the transition from Phase I to Phase II. In recent years, an increasing number of scholars in higher education have highlighted students' struggles and needs during the transition. While there have been studies

concerning doctoral students' readiness to conduct independent research (Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992; Golde & Dore, 2001; Golde & Walker, 2006; Nettles & Millett, 2006; Lovitts, 2005; 2008), most of the research has focused on U.S. domestic students' experiences; how international students experience such transition has been neglected.

In addition, writing is the most important part of doctoral training. With the increase of international graduate students in English-speaking universities, second language writing professionals have called attention to the "neglected genres" in the socialization process (Swales, 1990; Lin, 2003; Casanave & Li, 2008). However, most studies have been skewed towards the early stage of writing practices (Prior, 1991; Silva, Reichelt, & Lax-Farr, 1994; Riazi, 1997; Casanave, 1995; Hansen, 2000; Macbeth, 2010; Seloni, 2008), and how international graduate students actually write for the two academic genres (i.e., candidacy examination and dissertation grant) in the latter stages of their studies has been underexplored. In other words, the "textual bridges" (Gonzalez, 2007) between the end of coursework and the dissertation stage have rarely been documented.

In light of the awareness of the gap during the curricular transition and the limitations in the previous studies on students' doctoral writing challenges in the latter stages of studies, this qualitative dissertation addresses the gap by paying particular attention to the students' transition from course work to dissertation with the focus on writing practices of the candidacy examination and dissertation grant proposals. Questions pursued in the previous two chapters were:

(1) How did the all-but-dissertation (ABD) students from China and Taiwan across hard and soft sciences come to understand the requirements for candidacy examinations and meet faculty expectations for writing the examinations? What

did they actually write? What were their attitudes towards exam writing? What challenges did they face, and what were the resources, networks, and strategies the students employed?

(2) How did the students develop knowledge for writing dissertation grants? What challenges did they face, and what strategies did they use?

The main findings of the dissertation are summarized as follows. Chapter 2, entitled *"Write" of Passage: An Exploratory Study of International Graduate Students' Experiences with Candidacy Examinations*, explored how five students in hard and soft science disciplines came to understand the candidacy writing tasks. I analyzed the students' program handbooks and texts submitted for the candidacy examinations to better understand the department guidelines regarding the purpose and format of the examinations. The findings revealed that the genre of written candidacy examinations varies across disciplines. Among the 17 fields examined, five examples existed: (1) literature reviews, (2) assigned questions, (3) a dissertation proposal, (4) a dissertation proposal as well as answering questions based on the proposal, and (5) a non-thesis proposal. I found that in this stressful situation, the students were able to develop their own strategies for passing the examinations successfully; however, I argue that the candidacy examination is socio-politically controversial and deserves further attention.

Chapter 3 presented a case study that compared the dissertation grant writing experiences of two doctoral students. It showed what the student writers were doing for dissertation grant applications from two different disciplines: biophysics and musicology. The former applied for the same grant twice and successfully obtained the funding after her resubmission, whereas the latter applied for two grants but did not acquire either.

Adopting the case study approach with textual analysis, text-based interviews, and ethnographic observations of writing space, I showed the two students' struggles with the high-stakes grant writing tasks and their negotiations with the complex genre systems. I further demonstrated how networking with senior members of discourse communities plays a crucial role in the grant writing process.

In summary, drawing upon the overarching theoretical notion of *writing games* (Casanave, 2002), this dissertation reveals the struggles and challenges Chinese-speaking doctoral students from China and Taiwan in hard and soft sciences encountered when dealing with the two academic genres: candidacy examinations and dissertation grant proposals. Through analyses of case study students' accounts, I found that the students' writing experience in the transitional phase was like playing writing games, and they constantly needed to negotiate and re-negotiate: (1) the *language* of the game players in the local academic community, (2) epistemological game rules for how *knowledge* was thought to be constructed, and (3) imbalanced *power* relationships among the key players.
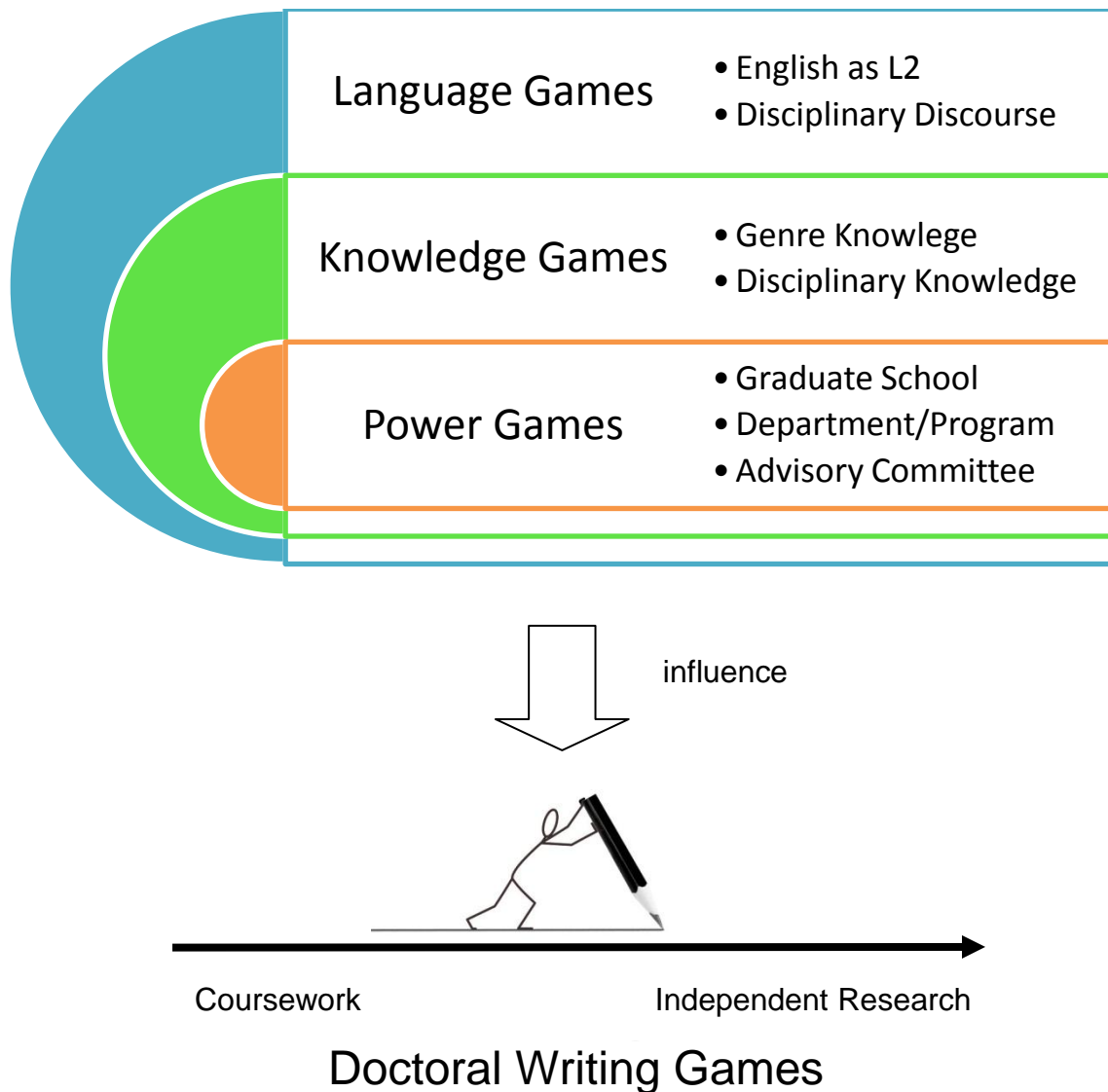
Figure 4.1 Writing Games from Coursework to Independent Research

With regard to "language games," the students (N=29) did not seem to be influenced by their use of English in their disciplinary writing, and they reported more difficulties in acquiring the disciplinary discourse than writing in English as a second language. Although previous studies reported that some L2 students might write in their first

languages and then translate documents into English during their composing processes (Li, 2005), this study did not find such practices among the case study participants (N=7). Some students noted that sometimes they encountered difficulties in the use of transitional words, reporting verbs, and sentence paraphrasing to avoid plagiarism. Most students referred to language as the last thing to be fixed after they completed their writing. As has been shown in Chapter 2, some case study students consulted their American peers for a grammar check on their proposals for candidacy examinations. They admitted that they spent most of their time acquiring disciplinary discourse through classes, research articles, conferences, laboratories, workshops, seminars, and so forth. In Tardy's (2006) comprehensive review of L1 and L2 genre learning, it is clear that much research has shown that L2 learners draw on their previous or current experiences when building knowledge of genres. I also noticed this kind of genre learning process from some students. Developing disciplinary discourse takes repeated practice of writing. The acquisition of disciplinary discourse is overlapped with "genre knowledge" as is listed in the second level of Figure 4.1.

Genre knowledge has been approached in many different ways. Originally, it referred to the text types (e.g., recipes, letters, and research articles) or text structures (e.g., narration, description, exposition, comparison and contrast) categorized by Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) practitioners or the Sydney School (e.g., Halliday, 1978). In recent years, it has been advanced by ESP and New Rhetoric scholars (Bazerman, 1994; Casanave, 2002; Bhatia, 2008; Prior, 2007). Attention has shifted away from the static and structured rhetorical modes of genres to the contexts where genres are situated. As Prior (2007) indicates, "there remains a tendency [among genre theorists and researchers]

to freeze writing, as though it entered the world from some other realm, to see writing as a noun rather than a verb" (p. 281). Recent scholarship has called attention to the writing processes, writers' experiences with producing texts, and influences on text products, including both intertextual and text-external factors (Johns, 2011). More specifically, Tardy (2009) discusses four kinds of overlapping genre knowledge: (1) knowledge of text form (appropriate linguistic resources at various discourse levels), (2) rhetorical concerns (awareness of purpose, audience, and social context), (3) process (procedures for carrying out the genre), and (4) subject matter (disciplinary content area). In Figure 4.1, I listed "Genre Knowledge" and "Disciplinary Knowledge" for discussion. By *genre knowledge*, I mean the first three items noted by Tardy. By *disciplinary knowledge,* I refer to the last item, that is, the subject matter.

Cited genre theories in the previous two chapters include Bazerman's (1994) view of *genre systems*; Bhatia's analytic approach, including both text-internal and text-external factors; and Paltridge's concept regarding typicality of examples of a certain genre as has been demonstrated with the five examples of candidacy examinations across disciplines. In my interviews with the 29 students, I found that most students made an effort to understand the required genres linguistically, rhetorically, and procedurally in their doctoral studies. They engaged in practices such as reading the student handbooks, talking with peers, consulting their advisor, exchanging thoughts with conference goers, seeking help from writing center tutors, attending advanced classes in ESL composition programs, using online resources, and so forth. These coping strategies reflected the ways they came to understand the genre systems in which they were situated. In most of the interviews, students were more articulate about the gatekeeping purposes of the genre

systems, rather than linguistic or rhetorical features of certain genres required in their

doctoral studies. For example, one male student from economics described the four exam

structures in his program in the following way: Year 1: qualifying exam, Year 2: field

exam, Year 3: 3rd year paper, and Year 4: candidacy exam (Interview, 5/7/2013). I was

struck by how students in economics had to write in strict conformity to the exam rules.

When asked which exam was the most rigorous, the student responded that it was the first

exam, the qualifying exam. In his first year, about one third of the students either flunked

out, even after they were given two chances to retake the exam, or decided to quit school

because of the pressure to pass. The interviewed student was one of the few survivors,

and he successfully passed the rest of the exams required. In this situation, genre

knowledge includes tactical test knowledge that exam takers require in order to pass the

exam and survive in their doctoral studies. This kind of knowledge and the process to

acquire such knowledge has seldom been discussed in ESP and New Rhetoric studies.

Power games were revealed in the previous chapters. I discussed how student grant

writers dealt with different levels of power relations (the funding systems) and how

candidacy exam writers negotiated power with multiple gatekeepers such as the Graduate

School, their department/program, or advisory committee. Awareness of negotiation of

identity and power has recently been raised by many L2 writing practitioners (e.g.,

Casanave, 2003; Matsuda, 2002). Increased writing research has focused on L1 and L2

peer interactions (Raymond & Parks, 2004; Liu, 2011; Cheng, 2013), student-professor

relationships (Parks & Raymond, 2004; Chen, 2006; Krase, 2007), plagiarism issues

(Currie, 1998; Abasi & Graves, 2008), and L2 faculty writing for scholarly publications

and journal editors (Flowerdew, 2000). The power relations examined in this project offer

ways of reconsidering the sociopolitical processes of writing for candidacy examinations and dissertation grant applications. For example, how "culture" plays a role when exam takers selected co-nationals to be their committee members and consulted their cohorts who passed the exams in order to understand the unspoken departmental rules. Similarly, culture existed when the student, Huan, from musicology selected her dissertation topic (female voice in Chinese films) for writing her grant proposals.

Central to the three games are the concepts of *transitions* and *identity*. All the people portrayed in this dissertation project were experiencing change of one kind or another as they participated in the literacy practices of candidacy examinations and dissertation grant proposals. Their pace, process, expectation, and nature of change are difficult to keep track of during such a short time frame and so as their search for identity and meaning of success. As Casanave notes, "some changes might look superficial and textual but contribute to or reflect profounder changes in how people learn to participate in literacy practices and in how they view themselves and others in their academic communities" (2002, p. 262). The two case studies highlight the students' views, discomfort, struggles, and disorientation as novices striving to find ways to socialize into the academic communities.

In summary, this dissertation project adds a new perspective to Casanave's (2002) use of writing games framework through the exploration of writing for candidacy examinations and dissertation grant proposals. In Casanave's seminal book, she captures academic literacy practices in a broader socialization process in higher education: undergraduate, master's, doctoral studies, and young faculty. However, complex and intricate writing processes such as the two under investigation in this study were not

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included. The focus on these two events can shed light on doctoral students' socialization during their transition from coursework to the dissertation phase.

4.2 Pedagogical Implications

The first and foremost implication from this dissertation is that advisors, program staff, and administrators need to be aware of students' readiness to conduct independent research as they transition from coursework to the dissertation phase. When designing and providing programs, faculty and administrators need to bear in mind students' difficulties and needs for better preparedness for independent research. Workshops or conferences can be provided for students. As Gardner (2008a) suggests, "Program staff and faculty can work with doctoral students as they make transitions toward independence by structuring multiple experiences before the research phase that require original thought and independence" (p. 346). It is suggested that more explicit guidance in earlier phases can help prepare students for this transition.

Moreover, advisors and L2 writing teachers need to be aware of international doctoral students' writing difficulties in the two genres during their transitions into independent research. Regarding preparation for the candidacy examination, advisors can encourage students to meet with them during their office hours. It is suggested that faculty supervising international doctoral students provide explicit advice and confirm students' understanding of messages to avoid ambiguity and miscommunication. With regard to dissertation grant proposals, bridging courses can be provided by writing teachers and disciplinary faculty to help students understand the macrostructures, writing conventions, and rhetorical moves as well as the genre systems such as the one consisting of documents sent to and created by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). In terms of

dissertation writing, writing teachers and advisors can encourage students to take dissertation writing courses, seek help from the writing center, and turn in drafts early for revisions and discussion.

In addition, some students discussed the uncomfortable experience of taking English-as-a-second-language (ESL) writing courses with students from different disciplines. The students commented that writing conventions and disciplinary discourse in hard and soft sciences are very different. For example, while scientists "describe, show, and prove" their results, those in the social sciences and humanities "argue, reveal, and discuss" their findings to present their authorial stance and knowledge of scholarship (Hyland, 2004b). When students from different disciplines are placed into the same class, it is likely that their limited time for learning disciplinary discourse in specific fields will diminish as different learners' needs are accommodated. ESL writing administrators and staff need to pay attention to the students' concerns with regard to this aspect. In spite of that, the students highly recommended ESL elective courses at the advanced level on such topics as conference paper writing and presentation and dissertation proposals and writing. The students who attended those classes encouraged the ESL writing program to continue to offer classes to help motivate international students who encounter writing blocks and low self-esteem issues.

Most of the students in this study indicated their lack of English academic writing training in their undergraduate studies in China or Taiwan. They took courses that placed emphasis on improvement of reading and writing for general English proficiency. The students perceived those classes as "useless" and "boring" and commented that their language abilities were underestimated. They mentioned their need for more tailored and

specific reading and writing training in relation to their fields of studies. Although in recent years, there have been moves from general English to English for Academic/Specific Purposes, some undergraduate programs in China or Taiwan may implement the former approach rather than the latter because of lack of adequate curriculum design, teacher training, or resources. It is suggested that universities in China or Taiwan need to be aware of students' needs and not impose policies on learning.

Furthermore, some students discussed the daunting experience of choosing an advisor or gaining a closer relationship with their advisor as they made the transition from coursework to the dissertation phase. It is suggested that if the students recognize faculty as their colleagues, power can be reciprocal between the two parties. They should not underestimate their rights as students, and neither should they assume that they need to be passive learners as they used to be in their home countries, which value the teacher's authority. Although cases vary from one to another, open discussions are encouraged prior to and during the transition into independent research. Communication channels such as face-to-face meetings, emails, or video conferencing can be useful if both parties agree and have access to the format.

Last but not least, while doctoral students complete their coursework, they are likely to lose contact with their advisors, peers, and committee members. It is suggested that students take the initiative and maintain regular contacts with their advisors and committee members. For international graduate students, they need to break linguistic, cultural, and psychological barriers in order to complete their dissertation-related writing. Although writing in English as a second language, international graduate students can

empower themselves and become competent scholarly writers. Several strategies are recommended by the students interviewed in this study:

(1) Logic comes before language. When composing the first draft, make sure you write with logic. Language can be fixed later. However, logic has to come first to display your knowledge.

(2) Finish the first draft, and then keep revising it until it is in good shape.

(3) Give time to revisions. Write early and give your readers sufficient time to provide feedback.

(4) Seek feedback from both internal and external members. In addition to their connections on campus, international students can reach out to peers, colleagues, faculty, or professionals in conferences and workshops or on blogs and websites.

(5) Find article models and good readings that inspire you when your advisor is not available. Some said, "*Ph.D. Comics* helps!" (See Appendix M.)

For students in humanities and social sciences, it is encouraged that they form writing groups with their peers, share their concerns, and keep regular writing habits. For students in hard sciences, they need to take responsibility for their learning of writing and seek help from different mediators or "literacy brokers" (Lillis & Curry, 2006) as they participate in writing practices such as writing a dissertation proposal for the candidacy examination and journal articles related to dissertation.

4.3 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this study indicate that doctoral writers need to negotiate demands influenced by the requirements of the Graduate School, program, and advisory committee as they move from coursework to the dissertation phase. However, several critical issues

need to be addressed when interpreting the data. In this section, I also provide possible directions for future research.

With regard to Chapter 2, this study has some research implications for future research in EAP. The candidacy exam is a complex site that includes a wide range of factors influencing writing practices, such as educational and linguistic backgrounds, race, gender, advisory committee, department, graduate school, and individual differences. Since this study only investigated L2 participants from Chinese-speaking backgrounds, the findings may be different from those of other international graduate student populations such as Korean, Turkish, Arabic, or Indian. Future research can explore exam takers' writing experiences from other linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Second, for this particular study, I only interviewed the students. For more in-depth data collection, it is suggested that interviews with the students' advisory committee members and administrative staff might help us better understand the students' preparation processes (Lin, 2003). Faculty perspectives may be different from those of students. Future research can explore how faculty members supervising international doctoral students view the influence of program policy on the structure of candidacy examinations and in what ways they expect the students to participate in the writing process of the examinations. Triangulation of perceptions from both the advisor and the advisee can shed light on the negotiation process and program culture.

Third, although this study only focused on students' exam *writing* practices, most of them admitted their fear and inability to respond to questions and take criticism in the *oral* portion of the examination as well. Among the 29 students interviewed in the first stage, almost all passed, though one student in pharmacy failed her oral exam and had to

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take it again, passing it on the second try. The student's advisory committee attributed her failure to cultural difference. Her humble tone seemed to imply a lack of confidence and resulted in her overuse of hedges in her responses (e.g., "I think..."). This is similar to one of Lin's (2003) participant's experience who found herself too nervous to speak in English during her oral defense. Future studies can focus on international students' narratives related to their linguistic difficulties and strategies in the oral exam settings.

Furthermore, this study focuses on five individual students' candidacy examination writing experiences representing each of the five written examples (literature reviews, assigned questions, a dissertation proposal, a dissertation proposal and questions based on the proposal, and a non-thesis proposal). Future researchers can combine each group of individual experiences and report overall findings. For example, if six students wrote literature review papers for their candidacy examinations, all of their experiences can be analyzed and summarized as a whole rather than reporting one representative case story. This can be applied to the rest of the four groups. Another alternative is to focus on only one example rather than five and investigate exam takers' writing struggles and strategies of the particular example (e.g., pharmacy students writing for non-thesis proposal).

Last, since I conducted this study at a Midwestern US university, future research can extend beyond a single university and explore variations of written examples and exam takers' experiences across institutions and geographical locations in the US.

In regard to the dissertation grant writing discussed in Chapter 3, to gain a deeper understanding, future research could investigate more closely grant writers' composing and interaction processes. As is indicated by Tardy (2003), longitudinal investigation, including both textual analysis and text-based interviews, is required to examine how

grant writers develop and change genre knowledge of texts and the genre system over time. Future scholars can examine the connection between genre and activity systems (Winsor, 1999) by looking at how a group of students participate in grant writing activities such as workshops or group meetings, where students often work with their peers and faculty (e.g., Ding, 2008). More research is needed to examine how student grant writers are initiated into or participate in the grant applications system. For example, the major funders in the US include: National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and NAEd Spencer Dissertation Fellowships in education, National Science Foundation (NSF), National Institutes of Health (NIH), Department of Energy (DOE) in sciences. In Canada, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) is one of the standard research grants (Feng & Shi, 2004). In the UK, two of the major funders are: the Economic and Social Science Research Council (ESRC), and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) (Koutsantoni, 2009). Closer examination into these activities may provide us more understanding of the students' dissertation grant writing contexts.

Second, as Kamberelis (1995) indicates, grant writers "neither old nor new community members ever learn genres once and for all; rather, they must continually learn the generic ways of making meaning with texts that evolve within the ongoing socio-rhetorical activity of the communities" (cited in Tardy, 2003, p. 150). While most research has focused on faculty grant writers, future research can explore the writing practices of student grant writers in different stages (e.g., doctoral students, all-but-dissertation students, and postdocs). This study has limitations in that it only examines

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two Chinese-speaking doctoral students' grant writing experiences. Future researchers can probe into writers' experiences from different linguistic or cultural backgrounds.

Third, this study compared the differences of two students' grant writing experiences across hard and soft disciplines. Future research can explore only one case in a particular discipline and examine it thoroughly and comprehensively over time and space.

Finally, since the current research only examines the students' perspectives, future research can include interviews with advisors for more in-depth insights into the collaboration. Moreover, some faculty may perceive dissertation grants as part of the doctoral training, while others may view them as extracurricular activity. How faculty perceives this genre may influence students' writing practices.

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Appendix A: Interview Guides

Stage 1: Student Retrospective Interview Guide (1-1.5 hours)

Flowchart (adapted from Gardner, 2008a)

Name:	Master's Major & School:
City of Origin:	Department:
Undergraduate Major & School:	Year of Study at OSU:

Preparing for TOEFL/GRE — Entering the PhD program — ESL Composition — Course work — Qualifying exam — Candidacy Exam — Proposal — Dissertation
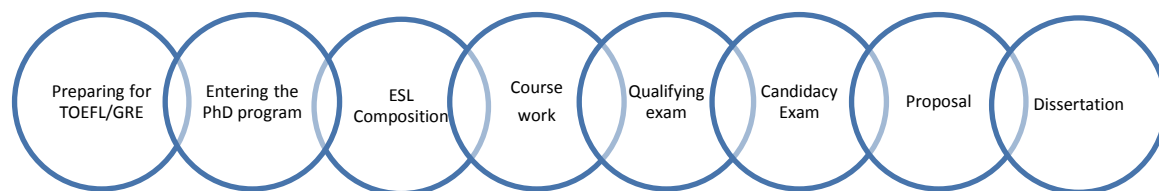
Demographics and Background
What city are you from in your home country?
Do you have children or any family members here with you?
When and where did you get your Bachelor's degree?
When and where did you get your master's degree?
Tell me about your story before you started your doctoral education. (What did you do before you pursue the PhD? When did you come to the university? Why did you decide to study for your PhD? How did you prepare for the school application? How many schools did you apply for? How did you prepare for the TOEFL and GRE tests? How did you decide what program to study? Who did you consult with? What kind of work experiences did you have before?)
What is your department or program?
How far along are you in your program?
Are you receiving funding for fellowship, research or teaching assistantship?
Tell me about your specific research or teaching interests.

When do you plan to graduate?

What is your career plan? Will you choose to stay in the US or return to your home country after you graduate?

Entering the PhD Program and Beginning Coursework

Tell me about your experience of the first quarter in your program. (What courses did you take? What course did you consider most challenging? Why so? What courses did you consider most interesting? Why so?)

Were you assigned a course advisor? (How did you come to understand the program structure and course requirements? Who else did you consult with?)

Were you assigned any requirements, such as teaching or research assistantship? What financial support did you have or have you had?

Tell me about your experience in your program following the first quarter. (What courses did you take? What kind of writing assignments were you required to do? How did you learn to write those assignments? What were your grades in these courses? Were you satisfied? Were you ever flunked in any courses?)

Tell me a course that was most unforgettable to you.

Did you have to take the qualifying exam in your program?

Were you required to submit a dissertation prospectus in the beginning stage of coursework?

Does your program require students to learn a second or third foreign language?

Describe your program. (How many students does your program recruit every year? How many faculty members does your program have? What are their specialties? How do their specialties match with your interests? What sources of support does your program provide or fail to provide? Do you feel that you fit in the program? Did you ever transfer to other program in the university?)

Did you take the ESL composition courses in the first year? (Any kind of graduate writing courses? What did you learn from those classes? What writing tasks were you assigned? How were they different from your disciplinary writing?)

What challenges did you encounter as an international student or as an English as a second language speaker? (What is your experience of academic writing in Chinese and English? What do you know about academic misconduct?)

Coursework Examinations

Describe your process and experience of preparing for the candidacy exam. (When did you take the exam? What did you have to prepare? How did you prepare for the exam? What reading and writing were involved? How much time did you spend on the preparation? How did you choose your advisor? How did you come into contact with your advisor? Did you ever change your advisor? How many committee members did you have? How did you go about forming the committee? Did you meet them in the office before the exam?)

Describe the processes of the written exams. (How did you receive the questions? How much time or how many days were you allowed to spend on each question? What were you required to do for each question? How would you evaluate your performance on the written exams?)

Describe the process of the oral exam. (When was the oral held after the written? What questions were you asked considered challenging? Anything unexpected? What did you do prior to the oral? Did you consult anyone about their experience?)

With regard to the candidacy exam, what did you consider most challenging? What did you consider most rewarding?

What suggestions do you have for your department regarding the exam requirements?

If any, how was the candidacy exam different from the qualifying exam?

Dissertation Proposal, Research, and Writing

Describe what you did after your candidacy exams both academically and non-academically. Did you experience difficulties in the transition from the completion of exams to dissertation research? If any, tell me about your transitional experience.

Tell me about the dissertation process in your program. (How did you come up with the research topic? Did you receive guidance from your advisor? Is your dissertation research part of your advisor's research project? Did you change your advisor after the candidacy exams? What texts were generated during the process of preparing for the proposal? Did you seek help from people other than your advisor? Who and where did you seek help from? How much time did you spend on your proposal? What did you do to plan for your research, e.g., apply for a scholarship, conduct a pilot study, visit the research site, apply for the IRB, or learn a foreign language? What difficulties did you encounter? How did you get your proposal approved? Does your program require proposal defense?)

How do you think the writing you did in coursework has prepared you for the writing demands of dissertation research?

Describe some of the crucial events which you think have impacted the direction of your research in the past year/months of study.

Briefly introduce your study, e.g., its aims, methodology, preliminary findings, etc.

Tell me about your working relationship with your advisor. (How often do you meet your advisor? What kind of feedback do you expect from your advisor? What have you learned from your advisor? How does your advisor give your feedback? How do you respond to his/her feedback? How do you feel when you see the feedback?)

What difficulties did you encounter during the data collection?

What difficulties did you encounter while writing up your dissertation? How far along are you in your dissertation write-up?

Does your program require students to publish in order to graduate? How many publications are required?

May I ask how many publications have you had? (How did you work on the article for submission? Did you receive help from your advisor? Was the publication part of your advisor's project? How long did it take for the article to be published? Did you co-author

with anyone on that article? Did you present your work in the conference? Do you have work-in-progress for publications? How many more do you plan to publish before graduation?)

What is the dissertation format you anticipate? Typical five chapters? Compilations of journal articles published? Topic-based?

When do you expect to complete your dissertation and get it defended? What are you required to do to defend your dissertation? Are you required to present your dissertation to the public?

Would you like to participate in the case study?

Stage 2: Multiple Case Studies
Student First Text-based Interview Guide (1-2 hrs)
Personal Writing Experiences
Tell me about your writing experiences. Describe your earliest memories of writing. Who or what influenced your early writing?

Do you do any non-academic writing? Do you write on blogs, Facebook, diaries, etc?

What do you read for pleasure? Newspaper, novels, essays, short stories, or blogs?

Where do you get inspiration for writing? Do you experience writer's block? What do you do when you experience writer's block?

College Writing
What reading or written assignments did you do in college?

How did you use English in college? Did you read or write professionally in English in college?

How do you think the writing you did as undergraduate has prepared you for the writing demands of graduate school?

Did you ever take academic writing or English writing courses in your home country?

Master's Program Writing
Describe your training in the master's program. Did you have chances to read or write in English? What assignments did you have? What problems did you encounter? How did you cope with those problems?

Did you write a master's thesis? What language did you use to write your master's thesis? Describe your master's thesis writing process. What was your thesis topic? What was your study about? How did you get started with writing? How long did it take to complete the thesis?

Did you publish your master's thesis? Who helped you with the publication?

Doctoral Writing
How do you think the writing you did as a master's student has prepared you for the writing demands of the doctoral program?

Dissertation Writing

Describe how you have adjusted to the writing expected in your program, i.e., what's different, similar, and who or what helps makes the adjustment from course work to dissertation easier?

Tell me about the story of these dissertation drafts.

Who has helped with your dissertation writing? For what purpose did you write these drafts?

Describe your dissertation writing habits and process. When is the best time to write?

What environment helps you with writing? Where do you usually write your dissertation?

How do you know what to do to get started?

Do you write in Chinese to help you write in English? When do you do this?

What resource books or dictionaries do you use for English writing?

How often do you show your drafts to your advisor? How often do you meet your advisor?

Have you ever asked your English-speaking peers to proofread or give you feedback?

What resources did you use for improving your writing? Did you seek help from the Writing Center? Who has helped with your dissertation writing?

How could the school better prepare students to cope with difficulties?

How does the school/program provide support or instruction for your writing? In what ways have you used these resources available?

Do you think you have an equal footing with American PhD students in terms of professional writing? Why or why not?

Do you have financial support for your dissertation research or writing?

Do you talk to your family about your dissertation work? Who do you talk with about your dissertation?

May I keep the writing sample(s) you brought with you today? I will read them before our next interview so we can discuss them.

Dissertation Supervision

Tell me about how you became Dr. X's advisee.

How would you characterize the most critical factors in good advising?

Describe your advisor's mentoring style. How does he/she advise you?

What have your experienced as problems in different phases of mentoring, e.g., coursework, qualifying exam, candidacy exam, proposal, dissertation research?

What do you expect from your advisor? Do you expect get feedback for your dissertation? How have your texts been dealt with?

Refer to your dissertation drafts and describe the feedback and revision process.

Have you ever co-authored with your advisor? Do you expect to co-author with your advisor?

Do you think your advisor's mentoring style matches with your expectations and learning style?

From the time you have known your advisor, has your relationship with him/her changed? If so, how?

Do you have equal footing in your relationship with your advisor?
Do you have any regrets in your relationship with your advisor? If so, how could this relationship be enriched?

Student Second Text-based Interview Guide (1-2 hrs)
Tell me about the story of this sample of writing. When did you get started with it? What is it about? Who are the audience? What are/were your aims in writing it?
Describe your writing process for this piece of writing.
What makes this good or bad work?
Point to a place in the text where you believe you struggled or had confidence with.
Who has helped you with this text? In what ways?
What would help you make this writing better?
Since our last discussion, what new writing demands are you encountering? How are you adujusting to them?
What did you write yesterday or in a week?
How do you describe the relationship between the dissertation project to your future career? How does it help you develop your writerly identity or professional identity?

Appendix B: Fields of Study for Recruitment of Students at the University

	Department/Program	Students from China/Taiwan		Faculty from China/Taiwan
		Recent Graduates	Current Students	
1	Agricultural, Environmental & Development Economics	1	11	1
2	Animal Sciences	1	5	1
3	Art Education	1	N/A	N/A
4	Astronomy	N/A	3	N/A
5	Chemistry & Biochemistry	10	22	22
6	Biophysics	N/A	14	18
7	Chemical Engineering	5	N/A	4
8	Chemical Physics	2	N/A	3
9	Civil Engineering	2	N/A	1
10	Communication	N/A	3	1
11	Computer Science & Engineering	4	34	10
12	East Asian Languages and Literatures	3	25	5
13	Economics	2	40	4
14	Education: Educational Policy & Leadership	8 (all education combined)	N/A	N/A
15	Education: Physical Activity & Education Services			N/A
16	Education: Teaching & Learning			N/A
17	Electrical and Computer Engineering	7	N/A	2
18	Environmental Science	1	16	5
19	Evolution, Ecology & Organismal Biology	N/A	5	N/A
20	Food Science and Technology	6	N/A	3
21	Food, Agricultural & Biological Engineering	2	7	5
22	Geodetic Science and Surveying	1	N/A	1

Table continued.

Table continued.

| | Department/Program | Students from China/Taiwan | | Faculty from China/Taiwan |
		Recent Graduates	Current Students	
23	Geography	N/A	13	5
24	Horticulture and Crop Science	N/A	6	1
25	Human Development and Family Science	N/A	1	1
26	Industrial and Systems Engineering	2	N/A	2
27	Integrated Biomedical Science	1	3	27 co-hire
28	Linguistics	N/A	3	N/A
29	Materials Science and Engineering	4	N/A	4
30	Mathematics	5	26	7
31	Mechanical Engineering	5	3	2
32	Microbiology	N/A	1	N/A
33	Molecular Cellular and Developmental Biology	2	21	2
34	Molecular Genetics	1	17	16
35	Musicology	1	1	1
36	Neuroscience	1	1	4
37	Nutrition	1	N/A	3
38	Pharmacy (Doctor of Philosophy in Pharmacy: Medicinal Chemistry & Pharmacognosy, Pharmaceutics, Pharmacology, Pharmacy Administration)	3	N/A	5
39	Philosophy	N/A	1	N/A
40	Physics	2	25	3
41	Plant Pathology	2	7	2
42	Political Science	1	2	N/A
43	Psychology	1	N/A	1
44	Public Health	1	N/A	N/A
45	Public Policy and Management	N/A	2	1
46	Sociology	N/A	5	1
47	Speech and Hearing Science	N/A	2	N/A
48	Statistics	2	59	5
49	Accounting & Management Info Systems	1	N/A	5 co-hire
50	Business Administration	2	N/A	5 same above
51	Oral Biology	N/A	1	N/A

(Records based on the OSU commencement programs during 2010-2011 and online student directory)

Appendix C: Recruitment Letter (English Version)

Chinese-speaking Doctoral Students' Experiences of

Transitions from Course Work to Dissertation

Recruitment of Chinese-speaking Doctoral Candidates at OSU

Hi friend,

Do you face any difficulty with your dissertation research? What's your experience of writing your dissertation in English as a second language? Any story to share?

My name is Ying-Hsueh Cheng (鄭英雪). I am from Taiwan. I am a doctoral student in the Foreign, Second, and Multilingual Language Education Program. I am conducting my dissertation research related with ***Chinese-speaking doctoral students' dissertation researching and writing experiences across natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities*** at The Ohio State University.

I am interested in your experience in your doctoral program—how you come to understand the program structure and requirements, make the transition from course work to dissertation stage, find a research topic, write your dissertation proposal, work with your advisor, develop resources and strategies for writing in English, the kinds of supports you look for and draw on, and ultimately how you write.

I want to invite you for an **interview about 1 to 1.5 hours**. Specifically, I am interested in talking to students who **completed undergraduate education in China or Taiwan** and are now pursuing doctoral education. Moreover, to be eligible to participate in my study, you must have passed your candidacy exam and are currently **enrolled as a doctoral candidate in the all-but-dissertation status**. That means, you are either working on your dissertation proposal, collecting/analyzing data, doing experiments, or writing up your dissertation.

Your participation in the interview is totally voluntary. You may withdraw from the interview at any point of time without penalty or loss of benefits. The information you provide will be confidential. You do not need to answer any questions that you don't want to respond.

You may speak Mandarin Chinese or English in the interview. You may choose the location where you feel comfortable for the interview. To show my appreciation for your time and help, I will provide you with a **$10 gift card** for participating in the interview.

Your opinions and experiences will contribute to our understanding of how Chinese-speaking ABD students come to understand dissertation related writing tasks and fulfill program requirements in an American university. After the study is completed, I will be able to provide you with some useful information pertaining to second language dissertation writing and mentoring.

If you are interested in participating in the initial interview, please contact me via email or phone: Ying-Hsueh Cheng 鄭英雪 (cheng.343@osu.edu) 614-209-3081. When you contact me, **please indicate your name, gender, department/program, how far you are in your PhD study, and expected time of graduation**.

I will not reveal your identity (including your real name, e-mail address, department, and other contact information) and will keep your identity confidential. Please feel free to contact me.

Happy Year of Dragon and best in your studies,

Ying-Hsueh Cheng 鄭英雪
(Co-investigator)
cheng.343@osu.edu
614-209-3081
Arps Hall, N High St, Columbus, OH 43210
Foreign, Second, and Multilingual Language Education
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Dr. Jan Nespor
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101 A Ramseyer, 29 W. Woodruff Ave, Columbus, OH 43210
School of Educational Policy and Leadership
The Ohio State University

IRB Protocol Number:	2012B0092
Protocol Title:	CHINESE-SPEAKING PHD STUDENTS' TRANSITIONS FROM COURSE WORK TO DISSERTATION IN A US UNIVERSITY
Date of IRB Approval:	March 26, 2012

Appendix D: Recruitment Letter (Chinese Version)
「就讀美國博士班及用英文撰寫論文的經驗」
研究訪談邀請函

您好：

如果您在大陸唸完本科，來OSU唸博士班，目前已通過博士資格考、正在進行您的論文研究工作，不管您來自什麼系所，將是本研究邀請的對象。

我叫鄭英雪，來自台灣屏東，就讀於OSU外語教育所，目前正在進行我的博士論文研究。研究目的主要是想瞭解「**台灣和大陸學生就讀美國博士班及用英文撰寫論文的經驗**」。我想聽聽您的故事—關於您是如何準備出國留學、完成修課、準備資格考、找到論文題目、和指導教授做研究及最後如何用英文撰寫論文。希望藉由此研究，把您的寶貴經驗和心路歷程，呈現給高等教育學者、指導國際學生的教授及英語寫作教學專家更深入的瞭解。

若您願意的話，請您email跟我連絡(cheng.343@osu.edu)，並註明**您的姓名、性別、系所、年級、論文研究主題、及預計畢業時間**。我將與您進行 **1 至 1.5小時的訪談**。為方便日後資料的整理、分析，訪談過程將會全程進行錄音；訪談可以用中文或英文；訪談地點將以您的方便、舒適和安全為考量。對於您的訪談內容，我將謹慎處理並且絕對保密，資料呈現會以匿名方式處理，僅供研究討論，請您放心！

因為您的參與才得以完成本研究，因此所有的研究成果將與您共享，另外也會致贈一**張10元的禮卡**，以表達對您辛苦參與研究的感謝之意。

訪談過程中，若有不舒服的感覺、或是不願意再往下談時，您絕對有權利要求暫停訪談或是退出研究。若對參與本研究過程有任何的疑慮，請您儘管提出。

誠摯邀請您的參與，並感謝您撥冗看完這封邀請函。

敬祝

龍年平安快樂

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Appendix E: Consent Form: Initial Retrospective Interview with Student
The Ohio State University Consent to Participate in Research

Stage 1: One-time Interview with Student

Study Title:	Chinese-speaking PhD Students' Transitions from Course Work to Dissertation in a US University
Researchers:	Ying-Hsueh Cheng (Co-Investigator) and Dr. Jan Nespor (Principal Investigator)
Sponsors:	OSU Graduate School; OSU Writing Center

This is a consent form for research participation. It contains important information about this study and what to expect if you decide to participate.

Your participation is voluntary.
Please consider the information carefully. Feel free to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and will receive a copy of the form.

Purpose:
The purpose of this research is to understand *Chinese-speaking doctoral students' dissertation researching and writing experience* at the Ohio State University. We are interested in your experience in your doctoral program—how you come to understand the program structure and requirements, make the transition from course work to dissertation stage, find a research topic, get started with your dissertation proposal, work with your advisor on the dissertation, develop resources and strategies for writing in English, the kinds of supports you look for and draw on, and ultimately how you write. We hope to contribute knowledge to doctoral education, second language dissertation writing, and dissertation mentoring.

Procedures/Tasks:
We want to invite you for an interview. To be eligible to participate, you must have passed your candidacy exam and be currently engaged in working on your dissertation proposal, collecting/analyzing data, or writing up your dissertation. You may speak Chinese or English in the interview. Some of the interview questions will deal with your choice of a research topic, your educational preparation or relevant work experience before entering the doctoral program, and so forth. But the main focus will be on your writing practice.

You may choose the location where you feel comfortable for the interview. We will audio-record the interview. The audio-recording data will be transcribed for in-depth analysis. In transcribing, we will replace your name with a pseudonym or code number, and remove identifying information.

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Duration:
The interview will last about 1 to 1.5 hours.

Risks and Benefits:
Your participation is completely voluntary. You will not be forced to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer (e.g., your working relationship with your advisor). Our focus is on language and writing processes, but there may be emotional stress or embarrassment when you are asked about your relationship with your advisor. You do not need to answer such question if you do not wish to answer. None of the information you provide will be accessible to your advisor. There are no more than minimal risks associated with this study although sometimes people do feel a little self-conscious when being audio-recorded.

Through the interview, you will reflect on the process you came to understand the dissertation related tasks as you moved from course work to the dissertation stage.   As has been indicated in many studies in higher education and second language writing, such reflections and retrospections may improve thinking which will benefit your learning, researching, and writing of your dissertation in English.
Although we cannot promise any direct benefits, this research may benefit other students or add to our knowledge of how better to help Chinese-speaking students through the dissertation process.

Confidentiality:
Information obtained from you will not be shared with others, or with your advisor, or presented in forms that would allow you to be identified. We will not use your real name in the dissertation or articles resulting from the research. Content or topic-specific information that would make the participants' dissertation recognizable will be removed. Other identifying information including your name, department, and dissertation title will be removed from the data. Only the researchers will have access to the data. Your advisor will not be named nor will your department be named.

Efforts will be made to keep your study-related information confidential. However, there may be circumstances where this information must be released. For example, personal information regarding your participation in this study may be disclosed if required by state law. Also, your records may be reviewed by the following groups (as applicable to the research):
- Office for Human Research Protections or other federal, state, or international regulatory agencies;
- The Ohio State University Institutional Review Board or Office of Responsible Research Practices;

Incentives:
If you participate in the interview (about 1 to 1.5 hrs), we will provide you a $10 gift card as a token of thanks for your time and help. Incentives are supported by the OSU Graduate School and the Writing Center.

Participant Rights:
You may refuse to participate in this study without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose to participate in the study, you may withdraw at any point of time without penalty or loss of benefits.
If you are a student or employee at The Ohio State, your decision will not affect your grades or employment status. By signing this form, you do not give up any personal legal rights you may have as a participant in this study.

For questions about your rights as a participant in this study, or if you feel you have been harmed in any way by your participation, or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, please contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251.

Contacts and Questions:
For questions, concerns, or complaints about the study**,** or if you feel you have been harmed in any way by your participation, you may contact:

Ying-Hsueh Cheng cheng.343@osu.edu
PhD Candidate
614-209-3081
Arps Hall, 1945 N High St, Columbus, OH 43210
Foreign, Second & Multilingual Language Education Program
School of Teaching and Learning

Dr. Jan Nespor nespor.2@osu.edu
Full Professor
101 A Ramseyer, 29 W. Woodruff Ave, Columbus, OH 43210
School of Educational Policy and Leadership
The Ohio State University

Signing the consent form
I have read (or someone has read to me) this form and I am aware that I am being asked to participate in a research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. I will be given a copy of this form**.**

Printed name of subject	**Signature of subject**

                                      AM/PM
Date and time

Investigator/Research Staff
I have explained the research to the participant or his/her representative before requesting the signature(s) above. There are no blanks in this document. A copy of this form has been given to the participant or his/her representative.

Printed name of person obtaining consent	**Signature of person obtaining consent**

                                      AM/PM
Date and time

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Appendix F: Consent Form: Case Study with Student
The Ohio State University Consent to Participate in Research

Stage 2: Case Study with Student

Study Title:	Chinese-speaking PhD Students' Transitions from Course Work to Dissertation in a US University
Researchers:	Ying-Hsueh Cheng (Co-Investigator) and Dr. Jan Nespor (Principal Investigator)
Sponsors:	OSU Graduate School; OSU Writing Center

This is a consent form for research participation. It contains important information about this study and what to expect if you decide to participate.

Your participation is voluntary.
Please consider the information carefully. Feel free to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and will receive a copy of the form.

Purpose:
The purpose of this research is to understand *Chinese-speaking doctoral students' dissertation researching and writing experience* at the Ohio State University. We are interested in your experience in your doctoral program—how you come to understand the program structure and requirements, make the transition from course work to dissertation stage, find a research topic, get started with your dissertation proposal, work with your advisor on the dissertation, develop resources and strategies for writing in English, the kinds of supports you look for and draw on, and ultimately how you write. We hope to contribute knowledge to doctoral education, second language dissertation writing, and dissertation mentoring.

Procedures/Tasks:
Since you participated in an initial interview, we want to invite you to participate in a case study. To be eligible to participate, you must have had your proposal approved either formally or informally and are currently working on your dissertation (i.e., collecting/analyzing data, or writing up your dissertation).
If you volunteer to participate in this study, we will ask you to do the following:
1. We will ask you to participate in the study for a 5-month period. (July – December 2012);
2. We will ask you to have 2 to 3 face-to-face text-based interviews. Your responses will be audio-recorded under your permission;

3. We will ask you to share your dissertation-related documents (e.g., reading notes, proposals, dissertation drafts, etc). We'd like you to bring your texts to these interviews. Or you may email your drafts prior to the interviews. We will discuss any work you want to share whether it be work in progress or completed. The work must be related to your dissertation. We would like to make copies of your drafts.
4. We will ask you for permission to conduct one-time ethnographic observation of your writing space (e.g., office or lab).

Some of the interview questions will deal with your academic writing experience, dissertation format, feedback from your advisor, and so forth. But the main focus will be on your writing practice. We will audio-record the interview. The audio-recording data will be transcribed for in-depth analysis. In transcribing we will replace your name with a pseudonym or code number, and remove identifying information.

Duration:
1. Text-based interviews (2 to 3 times) will last about 1 to 2 hours each time;
2. We would like to conduct an observation of your writing space lasting about 30 minutes;
3. Within five months (July to December 2012), we'd like to ask if we may collect and keep your dissertation related drafts for analysis (either hard copy or electronic file).

Risks and Benefits:
Pseudonyms will be used. We will not use your real name in the thesis or articles resulting from the research. Identifying information will be removed from the data. Only the researchers will have access to the data. Your advisor will not be named nor will your department be named. Your participation is completely voluntary. You will not be forced to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer (e.g., your working relationship with your advisor). Our focus is on language and writing processes, but there may be emotional stress or embarrassment when you are asked about your relationship with your advisor. You do not need to answer such question if you do not wish to answer. You will not be forced to provide your drafts if you do not wish to. None of the information you provide will be accessible to your advisor. There are no more than minimal risks associated with this study although sometimes people do feel a little self-conscious when being audio-recorded.

Through the interview, you will reflect on the process you came to understand the dissertation related tasks as you moved from course work to the dissertation stage. As has been indicated in many studies in higher education and second language writing, such reflections and retrospections may improve thinking which will benefit your learning, researching, and writing of your dissertation in English. Although we cannot promise any direct benefits, this research may benefit other students or add to our knowledge of how better to help Chinese-speaking students through the dissertation process.

Confidentiality:
Information obtained from you will not be shared with others, or with your advisor, or presented in forms that would allow you to be identified. We will not use your real name in the dissertation or articles resulting from the research. Identifying information including your name, department, and dissertation title will be removed from the data. Only the researchers will have access to the data. Your advisor will not be named nor will your department be named.

Efforts will be made to keep your study-related information confidential. However, there may be circumstances where this information must be released. For example, personal information regarding your

participation in this study may be disclosed if required by state law. Also, your records may be reviewed by the following groups (as applicable to the research):

- Office for Human Research Protections or other federal, state, or international regulatory agencies;
- The Ohio State University Institutional Review Board or Office of Responsible Research Practices;

Incentives:
If you participate in the case study, we will provide you a $10 gift card per hour in interviews as a token of thanks for your time and help. This amount of money will also include your participation in some brief follow-ups via email or phone, provisions of dissertation related writing, and observations of your writing spaces. These incentives are supported by the OSU Graduate School and the Writing Center.

Participant Rights:
You may refuse to participate in this study without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose to participate in the study, you may withdraw at any point of time without penalty or loss of benefits.
You may speak Mandarin Chinese or English in the interviews. You may choose the location where you feel comfortable for the interview. If you are a student or employee at The Ohio State, your decision will not affect your grades or employment status. By signing this form, you do not give up any personal legal rights you may have as a participant in this study.

For questions about your rights as a participant in this study, or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, please contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251).

Contacts and Questions:
For questions, concerns, or complaints about the study**,** or if you feel you have been harmed in any way by your participation, you may contact:

PhD Candidate
Ying-Hsueh Cheng cheng.343@osu.edu
614-209-3081
Foreign, Second & Multilingual Language Education Program
School of Teaching and Learning

Dr. Jan Nespor nespor.2@osu.edu
Educational Policy & Leadership
101 A Ramseyer, 29 W. Woodruff Ave, Columbus, OH 43210
School of Educational Policy and Leadership

Signing the consent form

I have read (or someone has read to me) this form and I am aware that I am being asked to participate in a research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. I will be given a copy of this form.

_____   _____
Printed name of subject   **Signature of subject**

                                          _____ **AM/PM**
                                          Date and time

Investigator/Research Staff

I have explained the research to the participant or his/her representative before requesting the signature(s) above. There are no blanks in this document. A copy of this form has been given to the participant or his/her representative.

_____   _____
Printed name of person obtaining consent   **Signature of person obtaining consent**

                                          _____ **AM/PM**
                                          Date and time

Appendix G: Data Sources (Chapter 3)

Data Sources	From Huan	From Wenli
Grant guidelines and websites of funding institutions	CCK: 1 ACLS: 1	1st application: 0 [Webpage removed] 2nd application: 1
Types of documents submitted (Proposal, chapter excerpt)	CCK: 2 ACLS: 3	1st submission: 3 2nd submission: 4
Individual face-to-face interviews	5 times (7 hours & 43 minutes)	4 times (3 hours & 21 minutes)
Email exchanges between student and advisor or other professors concerning grant proposals	15	8
Email exchanges between student and advisor and other professors concerning dissertation	28	N/A
Revised proposals and comments on dissertation chapter excerpt from advisor and other professors	CCK: 9 ACLS: 1	1st submission: 15 2nd submission: 22
Field notes and case diaries from interviews, observation and informal chats	14,825 words	12,795 words
Other materials	CV: 1 Revisions of a journal article: 5 Term papers: 2 Program handbook: 1 Flowchart of PhD study: 1	CV: 1 Journal articles: 2 Program handbook: 1 Flowchart of PhD study: 1

Creating the Research Plan - 8 Pages
Important: *If you are applying for a one-year Postdoctoral Fellowship it is important that you state this in the research plan.*

1. **Specific Aims** (1/2 page)
   Provide a clear, concise summary of the aims of the work proposed and its relationship to your long-term goals. State the hypothesis to be tested.

2. **Background and Significance** (1 page)
   Sketch the background leading to this application. Summarize important results outlined by others in the same field, critically evaluating existing knowledge. Identify gaps that this project is intended to fill.
   State concisely the importance and relevance of the research to cardiovascular function or disease, stroke, or to related fundamental problems.

3. **Preliminary Studies** (1 page)
   Describe concisely previous work related to the proposed research by the applicant that will help to establish the experience and competence of the investigator to pursue the proposed project. Include pilot studies showing the work is feasible. (If none, so state.)

4. **Research Design and Methods** (approx. 5 pages)
   Description of proposed tests, methods or procedures should be explicit, sufficiently detailed, and well defined to allow adequate evaluation of the approach to the problem. Describe any new methodology and its advantage over existing methodologies.
   Clearly describe overall design of the study, with careful consideration to statistical aspects of the approach, the adequacy of controls, and number of observations, as well as how results will be analyzed. Include details of any collaborative arrangements that have been made.
   Discuss the potential difficulties and limitations of the proposed procedures and alternative approaches to achieve the aims.

Table continued.

Table continued.

Note: If a proposed research project involves human subjects, the population sampled shall be inclusive of the general population, of relevance to the scientific question posed, without restriction in regard to gender, race, age, and socioeconomic status. Proposals that intentionally restrict the population sampled must include a compelling scientific rationale for such research design. Be sure to address this topic.

5. **Ethical aspects of the proposed research** (up to 1/2 page)
   Describe any special consideration you have given to all ethical issues involved in your proposed investigations (biohazards or human subjects, etc.), identifying risks and management. Be sure to address this topic. If using animals, go here for instructions. Discuss the nature of the informed consent that will be obtained if the research involves human subjects. If the proposed project involves no ethical questions, indicate "5: NONE".

Reminder: if this application is a "resubmission" of a previous proposal, mark changes within the Research Plan by using brackets, italics or bold (do not shade or underline changes). A separate document addressing resubmission modifications is also required. Go here for instructions.

Appendix I: Guidelines of CCK and ACLS Grant Proposals (Chapter 3)

	CCK in Taiwan (Due: 10/15/2011)	ACLS in the US (Due: 10/24/2011)
1	The significance of the contribution that the proposed project will make to the *advancement* of research in the field of Chinese Studies.	The potential of the project to *advance* the field of study in which it is proposed and make an *original* and *significant* contribution to knowledge.
2	The *quality* or potential quality of the applicant's work, including its *originality* in the field of Chinese Studies.	The *quality of the proposal* with regard to its methodology, scope, theoretical framework, and grounding in the relevant scholarly literature.
3	The *quality of the approach*, organization, and methodology of the proposed project.	The feasibility of the project and the likelihood that the applicant will *execute the work within the proposed timeframe*.
4	The likelihood that the applicant can successfully *complete the entire project* during the grant period.	

Appendix J: Timeline for Implementation

*Phase I: **Preparation** (September 2011 to March 2012)*: I conducted four pilot interviews and reformulated the interview guides. I will have the dissertation proposal defended and approved. My proposal defense is scheduled on Friday March 2, 2012. The IRB approval will be expected around the defense.

*Phase II: **Data Collection** (March to June 2012)*: I will conduct initial interviews with 10 to 20 students. I will also transcribe the interviews and compile the data.

*Phase III: **Data Collection and Analysis** (July to December 2012)*: The objective of this stage is to select multiple cases for in-depth investigation. On-site visits and interviews with several pairs of advisors and advisees will be conducted. Students' written texts (e.g., students' dissertation drafts, publications, technical reports) as well as their email correspondences with their advisors will be collected. I may also conduct interviews with writing center consultants who help the case study students with their dissertations. All the interviews will be transcribed and triangulated with multiple data sources.

*Phase IV: **Dissertation Write-up** (January to June 2013)*: I will conduct member-checks and write up the discussion and results in my dissertation. By December 2012, I will have completed my analysis of the selected cases. In January 2013, I will begin revisions, present partial findings and invite feedback in conferences. Findings will be presented at the international conferences such as American Association for Applied Linguistics and Second Language Writing Symposium. Dissertation revisions, defense, final approval and completion of the dissertation will be in June 2013. Graduation by July 2013 is my personal goal.

## Appendix K: Matrix for Research Questions and Methods

What do I need to know?	Why do I need to know this?	What kind of data will answer the questions?	Where can I find the data?	Timelines
Q1: How do the students experience the transition from coursework to dissertation?	To understand students' socialization experience and whether they encountered difficulties as they made the transition.	One-time retrospective interviews with students; program guidelines; grad school requirements	Meetings with 10 to 20 individual students; program guidelines; grad school handbook	March – June 2012 (Stage 1)
Q2: How do the students understand dissertation related writing tasks?	To gain insights into how students come to understand the implicit writing processes.	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
Q3: What resources and strategies do students use in writing their dissertations?	To discover how students develop resources and strategies for writing in English, and the kinds of supports they look for and draw on.	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
Q4: What forms of interactions between the advisor and advisee guide the dissertation process?	To investigate the ways the advisee and advisor communicate their expectations and issues related with dissertation writing.	2 to 3 text-based interviews with students; collection of texts that have the advisor's comments	Meetings with 3 to 5 case study students; dissertation related drafts; email correspondences between the student and advisor	July to Dec. 2012 Multiple case studies (Stage 2)
Q5: What are the differences between the ways Chinese advisors and non-Chinese advisors supervise their students as a whole?	To discover how students are inducted and guided by advisors who share linguistic comembership and those who do not.	Student interviews; observation of writing space (e.g., at the lab when advisor is out)	Meetings with 1 to 2 case study students who are supervised by Chinese advisors	July to Dec. 2012 1 to 2 cases

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Appendix L: Sample Page of Transcription Progress Check

No.	Word File Name	Length	Transcription Beginning Date	Date of Completion
1	Interview 1-1 with S13	25:46	4/23/2012	4/27/2012
	Interview 1-2 with S13	34:19		
2	Interview 1-1 with S11	1:37:54	4/30/2012	5/10/2012
	Interview 1-2 with S11	16:17		
	Interview 1-3 with S11	8:33		
3	Interview 1 with S16	1:36:37	5/17/2012	5/25/2012
4	Interview 1 with S19	1:04:25	6/5/2012	6/11/2012
5	Interview 1-1 with S18	1:01:20	6/11/2012	6/17/2012
	Interview 1-2 with S18	2:54		
6	Interview 1 with S14	1:26:33	6/19/2012	6/26/2012
7	Interview 1 with S03	1:05:55	6/27/2012	7/04/2012
8	Interview 3-1 with S01	24:23	7/05/2012	7/13/2012
	Interview 3-2 with S01	35:01		
	Interview 3-3 with S01	31:30		
9	Interview 2-1 with S01	16:29	7/15/2012	7/22/2012
	Interview 2-2 with S01	12:23		
	Interview 2-3 with S01	43:11		
	Interview 2-4 with S01	4:55		
10	Interview 1 with S20	1:40:58	7/26/2012	8/9/2012
11	Interview 2 with S19	47:55	8/13/2012	8/16/2012
12	Interview 1 with S05	1:33:43	8/20/2012	8/27/2012
13	Interview 2 with S04	25:51	8/28/2012	8/30/2012
14	Interview 1 with S15	1:07:19	9/10/2012	9/18/2012
15	Interview 1 with S08	1:36:57	9/19/2012	10/2/2012
16	Interview 1 with S17	1:02:51	10/15/2012	10/19/2012
17	Interview 1 with S21	1:45:15	10/22/2012	11/01/2012
18	Interview 1 with S22	1:07:08	11/05/2012	11/20/2012
19	Interview 1 with S23	2:14:57	11/26/2012	12/20/2012
20	Interview 2 with S15	1:11:21	12/26/2012	12/28/2012
21	Interview 3 with S19	1:13:39	12/31/2012	01/04/2013
22	Interview 3 with S12	1:21:31	01/06/2013	01/10/2013
23	Interview 1 with S24	1:09:38	01/16/203	01/24/2013
24	Interview 1 with S25	1:02:08	01/30/2013	02/14/2013

Appendix M: Sample Pages of PhD Comics Used for Text-based Interviews
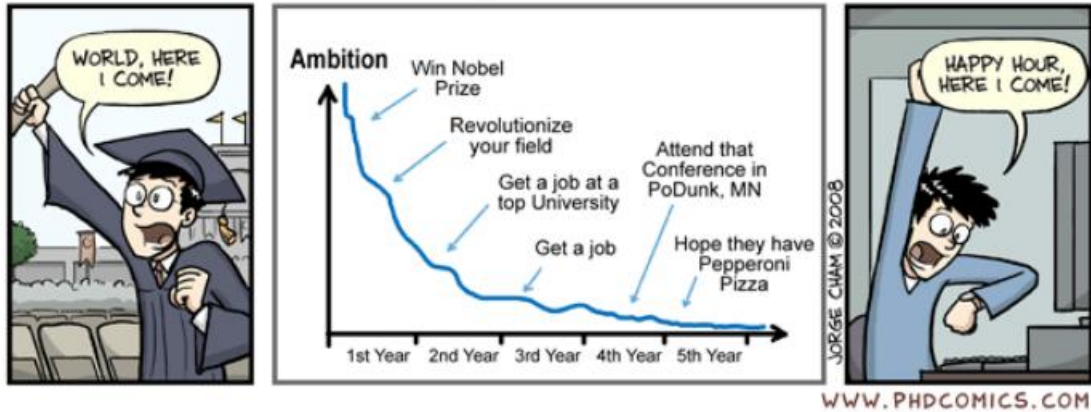
http://www.phdcomics.com/comics/archive.php?comicid=1012

PhD Comics – *Needs Work*

http://www.phdcomics.com/comics/archive_print.php?comicid=1001

http://www.phdcomics.com/comics/archive.php?comicid=1435

Drawn by Jorge Cham who got his PhD in Mechanical Engineering at Stanford University

Piled Higher and Deeper

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Appendix N: Data Indexing

Development of Dissertation Related Drafts

Case Study of the Student in Musicology

Dates/ Time	Types/ Forms	Purposes/ requirements	Frequency/ Amount	Assistance/ Consultation
05/2008	General Exam paper 1	Sit-in; closed book	3hrs in a separate day	Reviewed topics from previous exams
05/2008	General Exam paper 2	Sit-in; closed book	3hrs in a separate day	Same above
05/2008	General Exam paper 3	Sit-in; closed book	3hrs in a separate day	Same above
▲09/06/2010	Candidacy Exam paper 1	Take home	1 week; 25 pp	Committee member
09/13/2010	Candidacy Exam paper 2	Take home	1 week; 22 pp	Advisor
09/20/2010	Candidacy Exam Paper 3	Take home	1 week; 23 pp	Committee member
09/27/2010	Candidacy Exam Paper 4	Take home	1 week; 26 pp	Committee member
▲Multiple times from 2009 to 2011	Conference paper	Presentation	4 pp. (in single space)	Advisor
▲06/2011	Invited journal article (First submission August 2011; accepted in Nov.; resubmission in Dec. asked for resubmission)	publication	32 pp.	Advisor/editors

Table continued.

Table continued.

Dates/ Time	Types/ Forms	Purposes/ requirements	Frequency/ Amount	Assistance/ Consultation
▲10/15/2011	Dissertation Award	Dissertation Award	7 pp. for proposal	Prof. from X Univ. & Advisor Prof. from dept. of women's studies, Prof. from ESL program
▲11/09/2011	ACLS	Dissertation Award	5 pp. for proposal, 25 pp. for dissertation chapter excerpt	Same above
Roughly started 08/2011	Dissertation	Dissertation	6 to 7 chapters	Advisor; Father; committee members

Notes:
1) ▲: texts directly related with the dissertation
2) I submitted this case study to a conference with the title of: *"'Who Read the Proposal Before I Did?': A Case Study of a Dissertation Grant Proposal Writing Process.*" This paper was presented in the 7th Intercultural Rhetoric and Discourse Conference at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis in Indianapolis, Indiana on August 9-11, 2012.